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TECHNIQUES:
DESIGNING FOR ADVERTS
 How Radoxist Studio took on the challenge of creating an advertising image for TfL

IN THIS ISSUE...



APRIL MADDEN
 Editor

COVER IMAGE

ADOBE

www.adobe.com

With the release of Creative Cloud 2015, Adobe has set the bar even higher in terms of what Photoshop can achieve, so when it came to this issue's cover, there was no contest as to what we were going to feature!



It's here – Photoshop CC has been updated for 2015 and it packs in a wealth of new tools. On p26 we delve into the new features and functions available in the latest release and take you through them step by step. Discover how CreativeSync makes it even easier to work across the desktop and mobile apps that make up the Creative Cloud, learn what Photoshop's Artboards are and how to use them, and get to grips with the Dehaze tool. We also explain the updated Content Aware Move, Repair, Blur Gallery and typography tools and take an in-depth look at Adobe Stock.

This is an incredibly exciting release of CC, but no matter what version of Photoshop you use you'll find something new and interesting to inspire you this issue. Artist Ben Voldman shares his advice in his interview on p10, while up-and-coming studio Western Jack details some of its best commercial work to date on p18. Meanwhile, Radoxist Studio takes us inside the process of creating its highly

detailed vision of London as part of a TfL advertising campaign, on p74.

Some of the industry's most talented experts share their professional advice for flawless photo edits on p40 – it's packed with tips and tricks that will help you improve all kinds of photomanipulations and photos. On p50, Moe Pike Soe explains the techniques you need to really master masks and create detailed composites, while on p58 one of our favourite artists, character designer Piper Thibodeau, walks us through the process of designing a cartoon creature, and the digital painting techniques that bring it to life.

Recently on our Facebook page we shared some beautiful double-exposure artwork of animals and their habitats. Many of you asked how to re-create the effect yourselves, so on p68 Photoshop guru Andre Villanueva explains how to do exactly that. Plus we've got all the latest news, kit and inspirational images you could possibly want. Enjoy the issue!

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PHOTO EDITING



LAYER MASKS



CREATURE DESIGN



DOUBLE EXPOSURE



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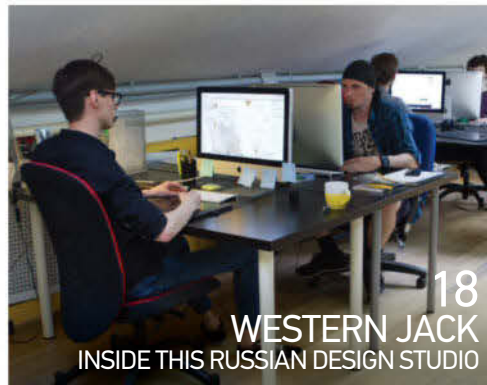
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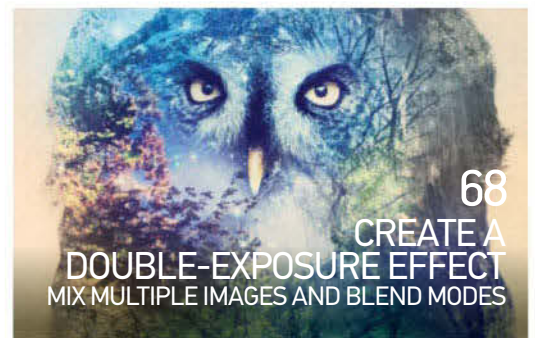
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ADVANCED PHOTOSHOP® PRO PANEL

MEET THE PROFESSIONALS SHARING THEIR PHOTOSHOP
EXPERTISE AND TECHNIQUES IN THIS ISSUE



PIPER THIBODEAU

www.piperthibodeau.com

Photoshop's default Airbrush tools are extremely useful for blending colours and giving you a nice range of opacity to work with. To better help you blend, when you get to the painting stage of your piece, it's always a good idea to keep your finger on the Alt/Opt hotkey (Eyedropper tool).

■ Find out more about how Piper Thibodeau uses painting techniques to create character designs on p58



ANDRE VILLANUEVA

www.000-000-0000.com

Bust through ruts with creative exercises. Produce variations of existing work. Piece together an arrangement with a restricted array of images. Limit (or expand) your palette. Just as I did with this, force yourself to complete a composition within a prearranged time span – don't think too much, just create!

■ Discover more creative techniques from Andre Villanueva as he walks you through creating a double exposure effect on p68



MOE PIKE SOE
http://pike.moe

Whether you're working on a photomanipulation, a digital painting or a 3D artwork, lighting is very important in creating realistic compositions. Picking up mobile photography helped me a lot in creating artworks. It helped me train my eyes by studying how different materials reflect in real life and how different light sources

affect the subjects in a composition.

■ Learn more of Moe Pike Soe's professional imaging tricks in his tutorial on masks on p50



“Whether you're working on a photomanipulation, a digital painting or a 3D artwork, lighting is very important in creating realistic compositions”

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STAND OUT TO CREATIVE RECRUITERS WITH TYROE

AIMED AT HELPING JUNIOR ARTISTS STAND OUT TO THE WORLD'S LEADING RECRUITERS, A NEW WEBSITE COULD REVOLUTIONISE THE WAY YOU GET YOUR FIRST CREATIVE JOB

Created by Andrew McDonald and Alwyn Hunt, the two founders of the CG Student Awards, **www.tyroe.com** promises to be a website that will let any artist with less than five years experience stand out to the world's leading creative recruiters. Highly competitive fields such as film, games, animation, graphic design, and illustration are all included.

"At present there are countless well-established portfolio systems and job boards available online and, let's face it, the market is flooded," McDonald begins. "However, the problem is that these sites are all aimed at top-end professionals with killer portfolios and glowing LinkedIn profiles with more film credits than Samuel L. Jackson. For an artist trying to establish themselves and gain experience, these platforms simply don't cater to their needs and they quickly get lost amongst the competition and never receive the exposure they deserve.

"Another major hurdle faced by junior artists is the process of applying for jobs. More often than not, when an artist is looking for work they send their application to every studio they can find online and simply wait by their computer for a bite. Not only does this flood recruitment teams with unsolicited applications, but at no stage does an artist actually find out if their application has been viewed, whether they have the right skills, if they could do something to improve their application, or even if the job has been filled."

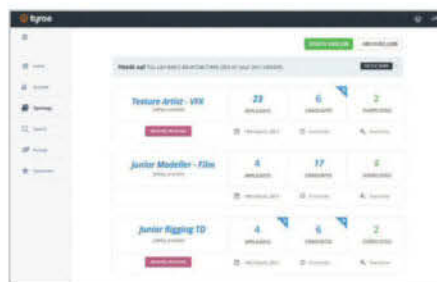
On **Tyroe.com**, junior artists can easily create an accessible portfolio-based profile – complete with a demo reel, gallery images, resume, skills, and quick

Junior artists can create accessible portfolio-based profiles



“More often than not, studios often don't have time to advertise; they simply want to search their internal database and find a vetted applicant. This is where Tyroe comes into play, and our tools allow recruiters to instantly search local talent and make contact”

Founder Andrew McDonald



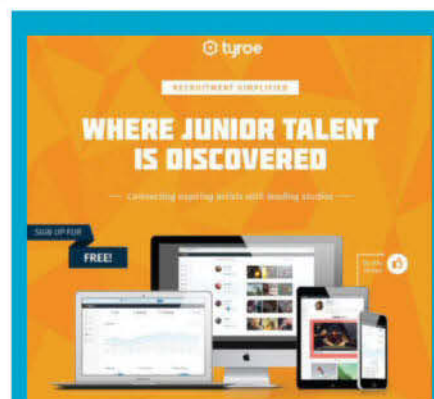
Apply for a job with just one click on Tyroe

to read Twitter-style recommendations – through an interactive builder. Each portfolio then instantly becomes visible to recruitment teams searching for talent, and recruiters are encouraged to provide invaluable portfolio feedback with reviews, as well as giving all the junior artist's work they look at an honest industry score.

Junior artists can use their personal score to monitor how they are performing compared to others in their field, and best of all, follow up by applying for jobs on the **Tyroe.com** Job Openings page. Applying for a job is absurdly easy – it's all done in just one button click.

"More often than not, studios often don't have time to advertise; they simply want to search their internal database and find a vetted applicant. This is where **Tyroe.com** comes into play, and our tools allow recruiters to instantly search local talent and make contact," founder Andrew McDonald continues. "If you like a job, simply click Hire Me and your application will be instantly delivered to the studio administrator and their team."

It's no wonder that Tyroe has already been anticipated by thousands of creatives before beta testing even starts. By turning something that's as stressful as getting a first creative job into a way for up-and-coming artists to learn and improve with ease, this website is set to change the industry for the better.



■ HOW IT ALL BEGAN

AFTER HAVING RUN THE CG STUDENT AWARDS FOR YEARS, THE FOUNDERS REVEAL WHERE THE IDEA FOR TYROE CAME FROM

"For us, the reason for building **Tyroe.com** started while working in the visual effects industry when we realised there was a huge disconnect between recruiters and junior artists," McDonald remembers. Both McDonald and Hunt had once been junior artists themselves, and knew better than most how much greater transparency and a simpler process could improve things for an aspiring artist.

"Too often studios would struggle with the vast number of job applications and the lack of time to schedule review sessions with senior staff to help find candidates," says McDonald. "Even more frustrating to witness was seeing employees spend time reviewing job applications, providing comments and even adding scores about an artist, but they would never actually share this information." Slowly, the idea for Tyroe was born.

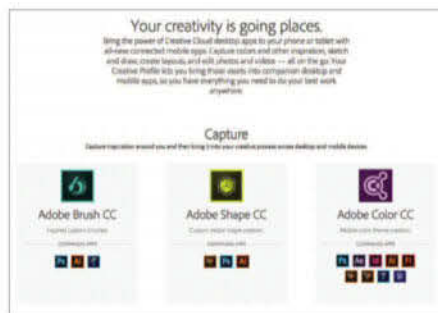
PHOTOSHOP TOUCH IS DISCONTINUED

ADOBE REDEFINES ITS APPROACH TO MOBILE APPS WITH AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF WHAT'S TO COME

Adobe has now announced that, several years after it first launched its version of Photoshop for mobile devices, Photoshop Touch, it is now ending development on it for good. Copies on existing devices will still work for the foreseeable future, but Photoshop Touch was discontinued in app stores at the start of June 2015.

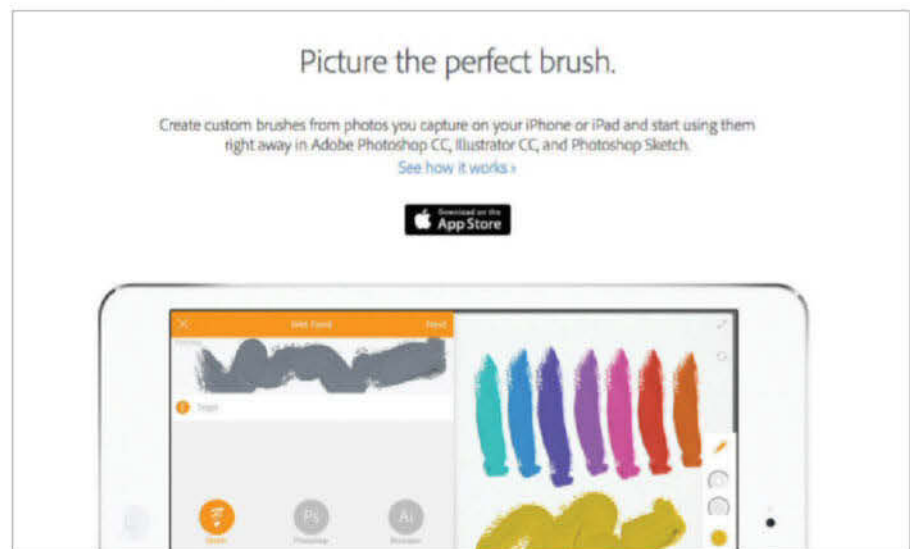
Instead, Adobe is completely changing the way it approaches creative apps. Replacing Photoshop Touch are a host of other apps that are specialised, as opposed to trying to replicate all of what Photoshop can do in mini.

Photoshop Mix, for instance, allows you to quickly composite multiple photos into one, all while being able to access files in Photoshop Mix from Creative Cloud and export anything created with Mix back onto your desktop Photoshop.



Photoshop Sketch is a powerful touch-driven sketching tool, Adobe Shape CC lets artists capture shapes with their phone and turn them into vectors to use in their designs, Adobe Color CC extracts colour themes from anything you point at with your mobile device, and Adobe Brush CC converts captured content into unique custom brushes. Everything created will be saved in the cloud, ready to use in Photoshop.

Adobe's Bryan O'Neil Hughes even announced that the company is now actively pursuing a serious retouching solution for mobile. Currently called Project Rigel, it is expected to be available in late 2015. He also announced some good news for artists on Android – Adobe are now actively developing new mobile applications for the OS that will be shared very soon.



THE POCKETBOOK PROJECT

GRAPHIC DESIGNER AND ILLUSTRATOR CHRISTIAN ERES HAS PUBLISHED A FREE BOOK OF TIPS FOR ARTISTS EVERYWHERE

Cristian Eres, a graphic designer and illustrator from Valencia, Spain, has decided to use the lessons he has learned during his time in the industry to help others with a new project.

Called *The Pocketbook*, the digital publication was illustrated in collaboration with other Valencia-based illustrators CranioDsgn and Grace García; who together with Eres designed the book as a mini-bible for anyone hoping to break into the creative industry and gain well-established careers. *The Pocketbook* collects 120 tips from not only Eres, CranioDsgn and Grace García, but a multitude of other featured creatives from the design world.

A wide variety of topics are covered including how to achieve personal growth as an artist to improve, working smart through tips on when to rest, recognising and avoiding procrastination, self promotion, creating a digital portfolio, finding your first job, working with clients, and invoicing.

Even more excitingly, the creators of the book have decided to make it all available for



free. To read *The Pocketbook* in full, all you need to do is find the digital copy on Behance at www.behance.net/gallery/24768773/The-Pocketbook or Scribd at www.scribd.com/doc/265548365/The-Pocketbook.

Getting a PDF copy of the book is also free, and only requires a payment in the form of a

tweet, in order to spread the word and share it with as many people as possible. With a creative commons license, *The Pocketbook* has even included free fonts, so that any designer can use the same fonts that were used in the book for their own work, all while reading the tips that the senior creatives have to offer.



www.benvoldman.com
@benvoldman

A COLOURFUL WORLD

BENJAMIN VOLDMAN IS AN ARTIST LIVING IN NEW YORK CITY, WHO FILLS VIBRANTLY COLOURED LITTLE CITIES WITH LIVELY AND HAPPY CHARACTERS

As you view Benjamin Voldman's portfolio, you will discover cities filled with brightly coloured characters. His artwork invokes a playful tone and youthful spirit, which will bring a smile to any viewer. The scenes that Voldman creates may be digital, but have a handmade feel to them.

DID YOU HAVE CLASSICAL ARTS TRAINING?

Yes. My undergraduate degree is in Fine Arts, where I studied sculpture and photography. Then in graduate school at SVA [New York's School of Visual Arts], I studied illustration. I feel like what I do currently really is a blend of all of those skill sets.

YOUR ART HAS A VERY YOUTHFUL FEEL TO IT. WHEN DID YOU DISCOVER YOUR STYLE?

I like that. Makes me feel young! I did not discover my style so much, as it is just the way I like to create images. That sounds really vague, but I think the best bet for finding a great style is to just not really think about it too much. I know this is hard when you're just starting out. But honestly, just follow your interests, be honest and your style will naturally follow. When I was first starting out, people told me

the same thing and I would want to punch them... But it really is true.

HOW HAS YOUR WORK EVOLVED OVER TIME?

I think my work has always followed my interests. So I suppose, it has changed to follow them. I also I worry less about what others will think and just make stuff I like, which comes with getting older.

WHERE DO YOU FIND YOUR INSPIRATION?

I get a lot of inspiration from things outside of art making. Like walking dogs, going outside, eating good food. I think the larger your real world experiences are, the greater your likelihood of making interesting work. Stop looking at the internet! Go outside!

As far as art goes, I love going to the museum. In particular I love Mayan art, traditional African sculpture, Native American pottery and Kachina dolls. I think it's always a much better idea to look at

work outside your direct field for inspiration, other than your current peers.

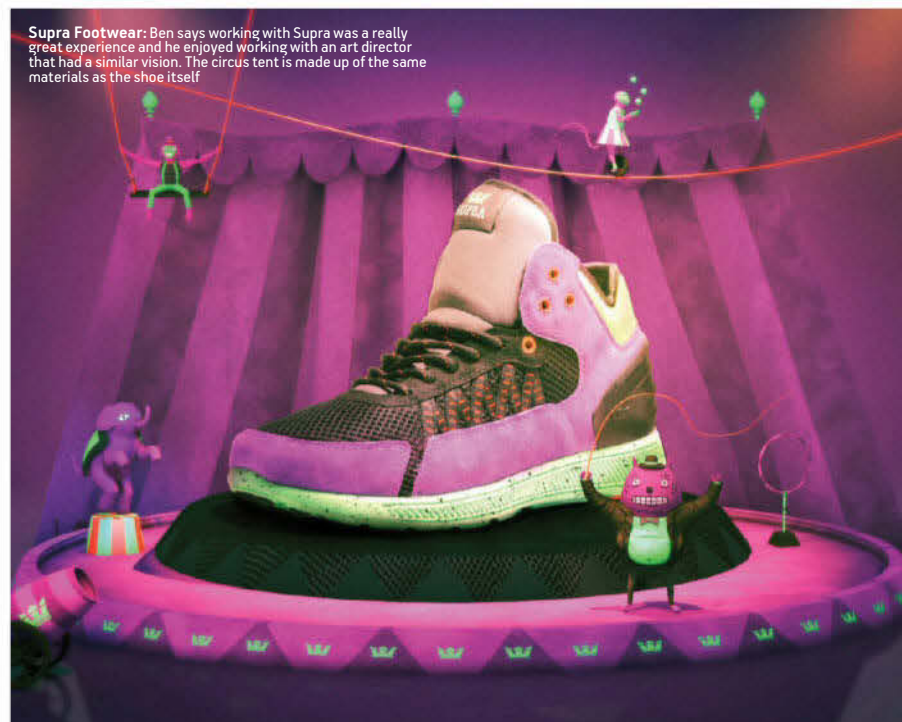
HOW IMPORTANT IS SKETCHING IN THE BEGINNING OF THE PROCESS?

Sketching is really important. It's important that the work comes from me and my brain and it's not just a by-product of button-clicking in software. So, I almost never start artwork directly in the software. Everything comes from my sketchbook and my challenge is always to make sure the software bends to my sketch and not the other way around.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PHOTOSHOP TOOL?

I have a lot of favourite tools! But one of my favourite new tools is the Adobe Image Generator. That thing is amazing. I love being able to open a PSD and tweak a texture and know that with the generator, that file will be pumped out automatically to my node network in Maya without me having to save or click

“I think the best bet for finding a great style is to just not really think about it too much. But honestly, just follow your interests, be honest and your style will naturally follow”



Supra Footwear: Ben says working with Supra was a really great experience and he enjoyed working with an art director that had a similar vision. The circus tent is made up of the same materials as the shoe itself



Seattle Weekly Dining Guide: Ben likes to keep cities bright and colourful, thus making the buildings the heroes of the image. On a technical level, paying attention to scale is important while creating urban landscapes

All images © Benjamin Voldman



Tencent: The image was created for *Fast Company* for their article about the Chinese company, Tencent. To symbolise that they are the 'new kid on the block' in the tech world I featured other tech giants surrounding them

anything else. Also being able to reference that file using the new Place Linked tool allows me to additionally create variations on the map very easily.

WHAT IS YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS?

I like to start off with some sketches in my sketchbook. From there I'll take a couple that I like, refine them and play with colour schemes. Once I get approval on those sketches from the client (or me if it's personal work) I'll usually sit down and try to figure out on paper what the best way of executing this piece will be. Asking myself questions like: Where can I save some time if the client is on a tight deadline? Where can I inject some more fun efficiently? This is the part where I want to make sure the production goes smoothly.

Then I'll bring those sketches into Maya or Zbrush and start sculpting. At this point most of the designing is done and I can just zone out and enjoy sculpting. After that if it's still-work I go to Photoshop for compositing or if it's animation I go to After Effects.

WHAT WAS YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS BEHIND ROOSEVELT ROW?

This was for a story on the hipster gentrification of the Roosevelt Row neighbourhood in Phoenix,



Phoenix New Times: Ben's idea was to have a hipster sporting the Roosevelt Row neighbourhood brightly tattooed on his neck for an article about gentrification for the *Phoenix New Times*



Seattle Weekly Dining Guide: This image was used as a cover for *Seattle Weekly's* Dining Guide



“ Sketching is really important. It’s important that the work comes from me and my brain and it’s not just a by-product of button-clicking in software ”



Best Of Dallas: Ben really enjoyed creating these characters, because the art director gave him lots of freedom. He combined many of his favourite things, including character design, food, and outdoor scenery

Arizona. The idea was to feature a hipster sporting a Roosevelt Row tattoo that incorporated lots of Arizona imagery: cacti, Arizona State, architecture, etc. This piece was interesting because it's technically a killed direction. The vast majority of the time the client I'm working with and I both agree on a direction, but this was a case where they killed a sketch I proposed in favour of a different direction they had in mind, which is totally fine, after all it is their money. But I knew this was a good sketch so I went ahead and made it anyway in my spare time and have received a lot of positive feedback on it. I spent probably about two days on it and made an animated version as well. Started off with a sketch in my sketchbook and then sculpted the main figure in Zbrush. After that I took the character into Maya for some light animation and finished everything up in After Effects.

TENCENT IS A VERY COLOURFUL CITYSCAPE, WHAT WAS YOUR APPROACH?

Glad you saw it as colourful! It worked! This one was tricky as I couldn't really use logos and had to rely on other tools like colour schemes to suggest different companies. I also wanted to make sure the buildings felt rich and vibrant, if that makes any sense and give some fun variation to the way each was built. I also tried to sprinkle in some fun characters like the Tencent penguins to add interest.

WHAT KIND OF ADVICE DO YOU GIVE THOSE STUDYING ART?

Go pet a dog! Go travel! Eat something different! Go for a hike! Do stuff! I see way too many students looking to places like Dribbble or Behance or whatever for their inspiration. And don't get me wrong, sites like these have their place... But your well of inspiration should come from outside of that.

HOW DO YOU FIND YOUR CLIENTS? IS THERE A SECRET TO PROMOTING ARTWORK ONLINE?

Well the hard part about being an illustrator is that usually the client finds you, which means they've had to have heard of you first, so self promotion is really the name of the game and the key to that is to treat it as being just as important as your client work. I make sure every day to spend some time doing some sort of self promotion whether it be sending out a print mailer, tweeting some work, answering an interview (like this right here!), contacting an art director or client I'd like to work with, etc. Treat your business like a plant that needs daily love and care and it will grow.

WHAT TYPES OF CLIENTS DO YOU ENJOY WORKING WITH THE MOST?

I like working with clients that have an open mind.



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It's great when a client comes to you and asks you what you think they should do and lets you design the solution. I'm totally that guy that goes to a restaurant and asks the waiter what they would recommend and love it when clients ask the same of me.

WHAT OTHER FORMS OF ART WOULD YOU ENJOY EXPERIMENTING WITH?

I like sculpting in the real world although I haven't done much lately. Something I would definitely like to get back into. I would love to try doing some pottery too!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE THING ABOUT CHARACTER DESIGN?

I like trying to give a bit of personality to my characters. Most of them are based on someone I know, a dog I've walked, or someone I saw on the subway. I also enjoy trying to create a character in a way that I haven't seen before or that is a bit more unexpected. I like that challenge.

HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE COLOURS?

I tend to go with big bright colours. That's my natural inclination and if anything, I usually have to pull back a little bit so it doesn't look like a box of crayons exploded. To try to achieve some harmony I'll do a colour sketch in my sketchbook and use that as a guide throughout

“I tend to go with big bright colours. I usually have to pull back a little bit so it doesn't look like a box of crayons exploded”

BEN VOLDMAN'S TOP PORTFOLIO TIPS

ENHANCE YOUR ART WITH KEY ART AND PRODUCTIVITY ADVICE

■ STOP LOOKING AT YOUR PHONE

Go outside. Pet a dog. Climb a tree. Your real world experiences create a well of inspiration for your artwork so make sure to fill it often. This will also help you create designs in your own unique vision, because everyone sees the world differently.

■ LEARN HOW TO DRAW

Everyone can learn how to draw. It's just like learning any language. You will be horrible at it for while, but eventually you'll pick it up. It is an invaluable skill for a visual artist. The start of an amazing graphic always begins in your sketchbook.

■ TELL A STORY

Such a cliché, but it's true. All your stylistic design choices should be based on how to effectively communicate your idea or story. What colour should I make this character's hat? Go back to the concept. You'll find the answer in there. Creating a story will give your work [a great deal] more meaning.

■ DESIGN YOUR COMPOSITION AROUND ITS FINAL HOME

Your composition choices should be based on where the piece will end up. If its final home is on your website think about whether vertical or horizontal pieces look best.

Going on a mobile app? Make sure the composition isn't too cluttered so it can read at a small size.

■ THUMBNAILED FIRST

I always start off all my pieces as a tiny one-inch thumbnail in my sketchbook. If I can get the image working at that size, it will work at any size. This process helps you hone in on the essential needs of your design and clears away all the clutter.

■ ACCEPT CRITICISM

You are not your artwork. You are way more interesting and beautiful than your artwork. Your art is just some stuff you made so get over it. The sooner you start listening to what people say and stop shutting down when people give criticism the faster you'll grow.

■ CHARACTER'S SILHOUETTE

This is the heart and soul of your character design. If the silhouette is solid you are in a good spot. No amount of detail or colour can fix a character with a clunky or timid silhouette.

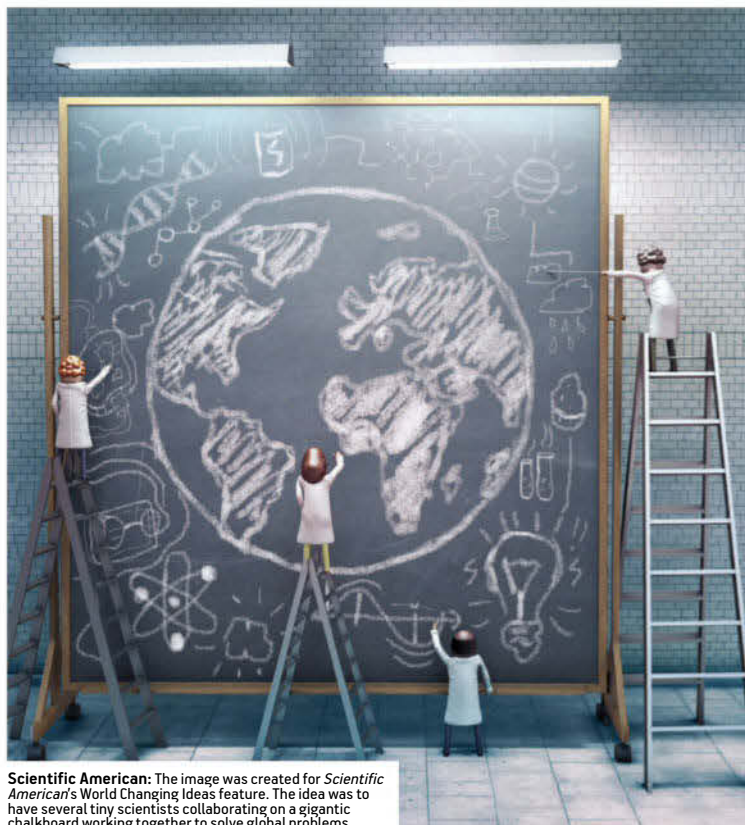
■ LISTEN TO THE MAJORITY

If a bunch of people tell you they think the character's hat looks better red and one person tells you they like it blue, chances are the hat should be red. It is always good to try something different but sometimes the larger part of the crowd may be correct.

the project. As far as textures go I try to keep it somewhat simple. I think especially in 3D, people can go too crazy with super realistic high-resolution textures, when often a simple flat colour can be a better look.

DO YOU HAVE A CLIENT OR AGENCY THAT YOU DREAM ABOUT COLLABORATING WITH?

I'm a big fan of the work at both Psyop and Buck. They do great stuff! Check them out.



Scientific American: The image was created for *Scientific American's* World Changing Ideas feature. The idea was to have several tiny scientists collaborating on a gigantic chalkboard working together to solve global problems



Nashville: Having mastered creating cityscapes, Ben took great pleasure in working on developing an outdoor scene full of nature, thus showing he is not limited to urban landscapes and that he can create more organic types of scenery as well

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ILLUSTRATING THE BIZARRE AND FANTASTICAL

WE DISCOVER HOW NORSE MYTHOLOGY, PHOTOSHOP, AND A WACOM CINTIQ WERE USED TO DEVELOP THE T-SHIRT AND POSTERS FOR BAND CONVERGE'S RECENT TOUR

ABOUT THE ARTIST PALE HORSE

www.palehorsesdesign.com



Pale Horse is an American artist who is inspired by world culture and uses his digital illustration skills to connect with people around the globe and seek out new adventures.

NAME OF PROJECT CONVERGE: SCREEN-PRINTED POSTER & T-SHIRT ILLUSTRATION

Bent on contributing to the bizarre and fantastic nature of human culture, artist Chris Parks – commonly known as Pale Horse – first started learning Photoshop before he even had his own computer: back in 1995.

"I decided to take some graphic design classes at a technical school that allowed me to leave high school for a few hours each day to make art with computers," he remembers. "I used my new abilities to make artwork and t-shirt graphics for a band I was in, and later got a job doing colour separations and film output for punk, indie and metal band album art and posters."

Since then, Pale Horse has been commissioned to create his colourful, intricate illustrations by companies such as Nike, Mini Cooper, WWE, Hasbro, *Wired* magazine and many others. Recently, however, he's taken on a project that's brought him back to his artistic roots – creating a screen-printed poster and t-shirt illustration for Converge's recent tour together with fellow artist and good friend, MØnster. We talk to Pale Horse to find out more.

IS IT DIFFERENT ILLUSTRATING FOR A BAND COMPARED TO OTHER CLIENTS?

In this case I felt a lot of added, personal pressure to create a great piece for the band I grew up watching and listening to religiously. Converge has always been known for their high-level aesthetic and they work with top artists in the game for their merch, including the lead singer Jacob Bannon, who was the direct point of contact for the project.

From my experience, it can often be difficult working with bands because every member may want something different and they aren't usually very good with helpful feedback, but that wasn't the case with Converge. Bannon provided great insights on the concept sketch that were incorporated into the final illustration.

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP YOUR WORK?

I wanted the composition to work well for both posters and t-shirts, so I looked at my rough



Space Dragon illustration

sketch mocked up on a shirt template and made updates as needed. I decided on a symmetrical composition with slight differences between the two sides and used stars in the background to give a sense of the lonely, vast expanse of infinite time and space.

This illustration was printed in three different colour ways for t-shirts and posters. The first poster sold on the tour used a metallic gold and the version available on my site was printed on charcoal paper and incorporates a day-glo, black light reflective, electric yellow ink.

I like my illustrations to look very clean, but still as natural and hand-drawn as possible. To achieve this, I create my digital artwork on a Wacom Cintiq 24HD and really only use one brush, along with the Eraser tool, for most of the final piece. Currently, my favourite brush preset is called Organic Inker and is available from Rey Frenden at Frenden.com. I always say that the hardest part of what I do is figuring out how to stay in my seat and just continue drawing.

COULD YOU TAKE US THROUGH THE WORKFLOW THAT WENT INTO THE PROJECT?

I always start by researching the subject matter, looking at my books and images online, reading about myths and exploring the possibilities of where the piece could go.

M0nster and I discussed various ideas based around viking warriors, banshees and Norse gods before landing on the valkyrie concept. After the initial research, I like to sit, meditate and visualise what the piece could look like, this will often let me work out ideas in my mind and allow me to start sketching what I envisioned.

From there I took some photos of my wife's hands positioned for reference and I used 3D software to export a reference image to sketch on top of for the face. In this phase, I sent the rough sketch to M0nster and we continued to talk about the concept behind the character over the phone while I added new symbols and elements to the design. I like to have everything pretty well worked out in the concept drawing, so that I can free my mind to sit for the long hours it takes to draw in the clean linework and colour in the final rendering phase.

WHAT'S THE MOST USEFUL PHOTOSHOP TECHNIQUE YOU'VE EVER LEARNED?

Putting in many hours of practice and learning how to control my pen pressure to keep a steady hand has been my most useful technique. I don't use many complicated tools or tricks with my illustrations, just good brush presets (I like the inkers from Frenden.com), a lot of RAM, the latest version of Photoshop CC, along with my Wacom Cintiq and lots of patience are the key ingredients to my aesthetic.



Charcoal Poster



Skull detail



Snake and scale detail

HOW ABOUT THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE OF YOUR WHOLE CAREER, AND HOW YOU GOT PAST IT?

My recent solo exhibit was the biggest project that I've ever taken on and I still can't believe that it actually happened! In this show, I got to bring to life four original, masked lucha libre characters that become the inspiration for my illustration series

and battled it out in a full sized wrestling ring in front of the audience.

Each character had a backstory, original theme music, intro videos and authentic lucha gear based on my designs that were hand-sewn by a professional luchador who was trained in Mexico for lucha libre and mask making. Check out PaleHorseLucha.com for all the details on that project.

WESTERN JACK

EXPLORE THIS RUSSIAN STUDIO WITH A PENCHANT FOR WORKING WITH UNUSUAL MATERIALS AND EXPERIMENTING TO FIND NEW WAYS OF WORKING FOR EVERY SINGLE PROJECT

Creating surprise and working with the unusual are some of the traits that Western Jack employs to keep the creative studio at the top of its game.

"Each company has its own peculiarity. We like to surprise, creating ordinary objects from unusual materials, to create prints [depicting] non-existent things, to pay attention to the form and content," says art director Dmitry Glazyrin. "We're not afraid to experiment and we [are not] afraid to [come up with] new ideas."

Glazyrin is one of the founders of the studio, but he was only introduced to the industry back in 2008, when he was a student looking for a job. He came across a web designer position and went for it, even though he had no idea what a web designer did. Not surprisingly, he failed the test set, but the industry "swallowed me up." He also discovered the joys of Photoshop at this time, having been using MS Paint, and found that his passion was more for illustration than interfaces and layouts. So he focused on this field, despite the fact that Russia didn't really have market for advertising illustration at the time.

"[It was] around that time [that] I discovered the work of Platinum FMD (www.platinumfmd.com.br) and that was a crucial moment for me. Looking through the portfolio of the studio, I was very impressed and I remember thinking to myself, 'Wow, I really want to draw like that!'. Three years later I flew to Rio de Janeiro to work for them as a designer and illustrator."

The experience was priceless, and in 2012 Glazyrin founded Western Jack, which he cites as the time that he "not only grew as a professional, but also as the head of a company with all the difficulties and pitfalls".

The studio now has a full creative team, all working towards the same objectives and sharing the same passions. "It seems like we never stop working. Of course, we have weekends, vacations, free time... But if you're really passionate about your work, then your brain [comes up with] new ideas all the time. You think about how to do something better and more interesting."

Ideas, passion and the ability to find new and unusual ways to create designs have led to some notable projects for Western Jack. While much of its work is for the advertising industry, they take on other ideas that interest them. A recent collaboration with creative agency CreativePeople (www.cpeople.ru) was based around an idea of creating an



“Each company has its own peculiarity. We like to surprise, creating ordinary objects from unusual materials”

Western Jack

ABOUT THE STUDIO

WESTERN JACK
www.westernjack.com

Western Jack creates CGI images using all artistic facilities (3D graphics, retouching and photography) to find the best solutions for image creation.



Ekaterina Kovaleva
Executive Producer



Dmitriy Glazyrin
Art Director

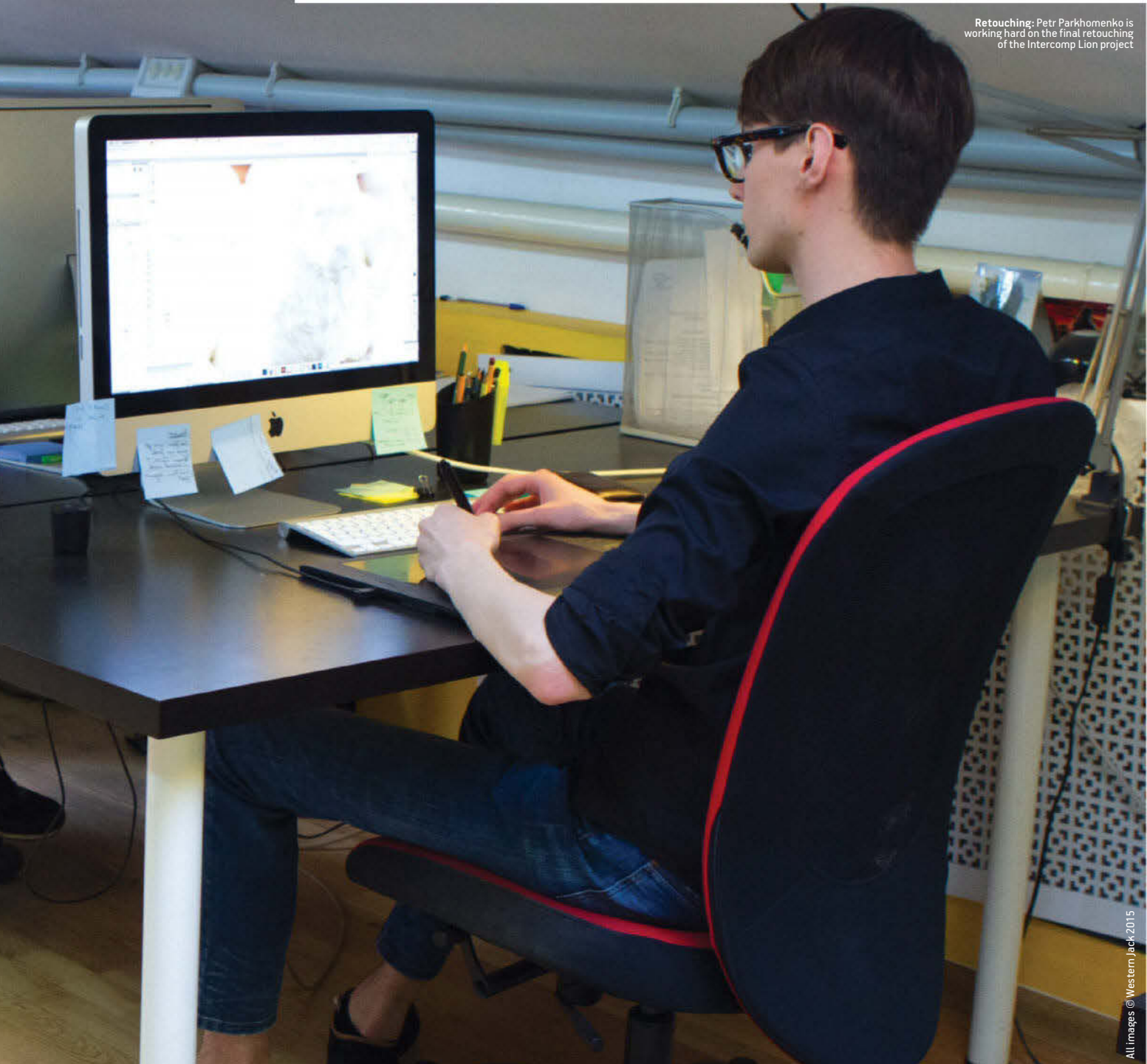


Aleksander Kowalsky
Creative Director

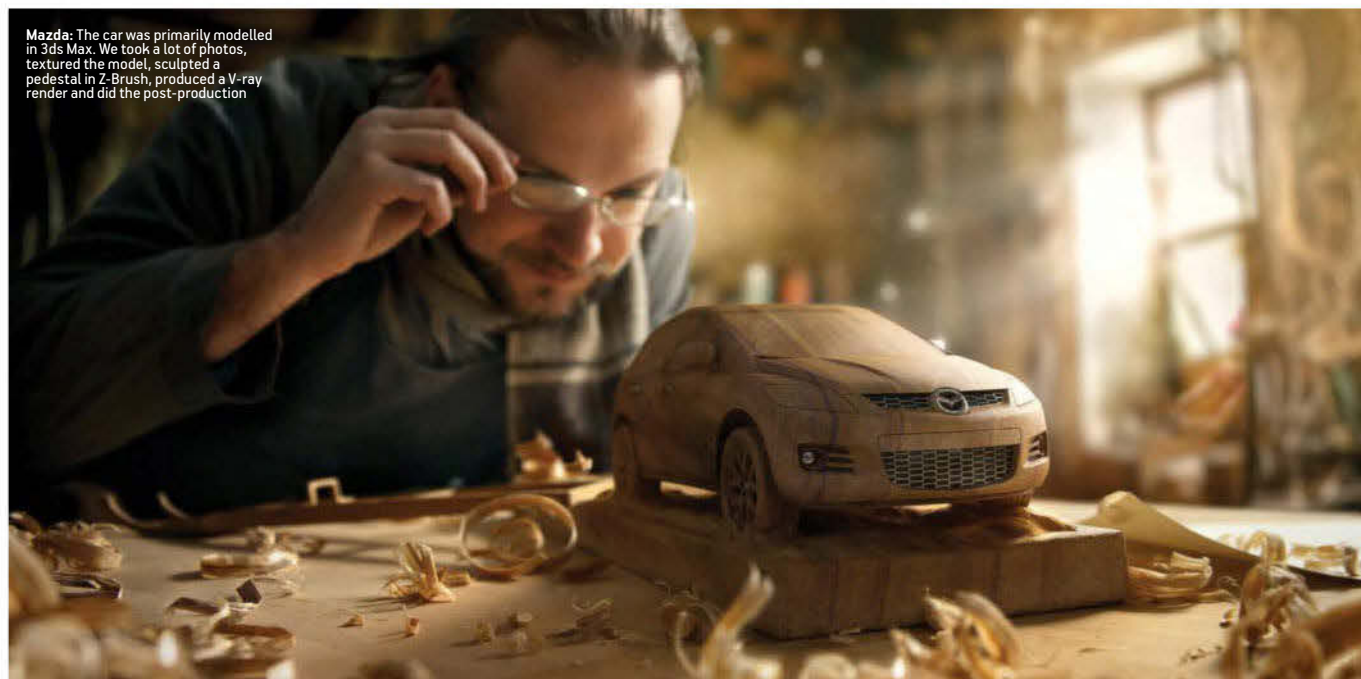


Sergey Krasotin
Producer

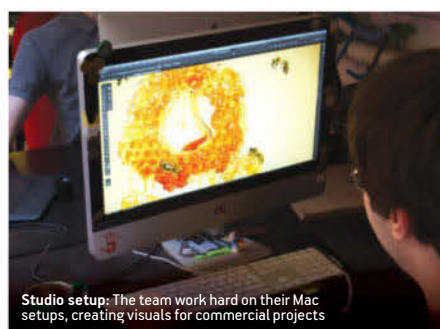
Retouching: Petr Parkhomenko is working hard on the final retouching of the Intercomp Lion project



All images © Western Jack 2015



Mazda: The car was primarily modelled in 3ds Max. We took a lot of photos, textured the model, sculpted a pedestal in Z-Brush, produced a V-ray render and did the post-production



Studio setup: The team work hard on their Mac setups, creating visuals for commercial projects



Favourite project: Visuals from one of the team's favourite projects, creating characters on children's plates



Meetings: Sharing ideas and hard at work in Western Jack's studio space

additional element to add to a child's dinner plate. Knowing how children get easily distracted, they designed small characters that fit to the plate and are revealed as the child eats more of their food, encouraging them to continue. Creative director Alexander Kowalsky explains: "Our designer, Stanislav Nikitin, thought out every detail of the form and nature of the characters. They had to think through much more detail than is usual for advertising illustrations. We've sketched a lot, looked at form and character, learned how and what is possible to produce within future production. As a

result, we made true heroes for children and we want to produce these figures in reality, as a supplement to child's plate."

Their work for advertising clients is no less creative, with recent projects incorporating all kinds of unusual materials to achieve their visions. One example was a project called Lion for Intercomp, where the team learned how to create a lion from dough, which proved a real challenge. "First, we tried to model the lion, but we didn't understand the material, what the shape should look like and, as a result, the visualisation turned out to be strange," describes Glazyrin. "To clarify

if it's really possible to shape a lion from dough, we tried to make it by hand. This kind of work gave us clear understanding of the scale, the degree of detail, the level of plasticity of material, etc, and only after this, we got back to 3D modelling."

A lot of the work that the team does takes place in 3D software: V-Ray Pixologic ZBrush, Autodesk 3ds Max. "There is nothing special [about the software we use]," says Kowalsky. "The main part of our production process, does not depend on software, but on creative thinking, on working with clients and designers. It isn't important what kind of software you use, but how you



■ HOW EASTWARD WAS MADE

THE TEAM AT WESTERN JACK TALK US THROUGH THE CREATION OF THIS KEY VISUAL FOR AN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN



01 | START BY SKETCHING

We started with describing the idea to the client. After approving the general idea, we continued to work on the sketch – our sketcher made a highly detailed sketch for better understanding as to what the final image would look like.



02 | ARRANGE THE PHOTOSHOOT

The major difficulty was to find an appropriate model for the female character. Usually photo agencies can offer models with a [certain] body constitution, but in this case we needed a different type of woman, which alone [would be] enough to create awe in the beholders.



03 | 3D MODELLING AND COMPOSING

We modelled all the background items (such as jars, shelves, etc). We also made the glass case in 3ds Max, instead of photographing it, because it was much easier than trying to find a suitable showcase.



04 | RETOUCHING AND FINISHING

We changed the lighting to make the image more atmospheric, added in the typographic message and that's all — here is the final image side by side with the before image so you can see what was done.

use them." Photoshop plays an important role near the end of the workflow: "[It] is good for retouching and making images look high quality, because usually render-quality is not enough. Light is the cutting-edge thing in visual design, because the lighting sets the mood of the image. We use Photoshop for retouching the lighting setup. Our sketcher [also] uses Photoshop to draw some scratches, the matte designer composes backgrounds using Photoshop and the producer even uses Photoshop to draw cool icons for client presentations."

The creative thinking process leads to new and innovative ideas for each and every commission, but do the team try and maintain a certain style? Producer Sergey Krasotin says they do: "Every time we try to work in a new way, but also we still keep our own style. When a customer chooses a contractor, he focuses on the mood of the portfolio. If the customer likes the style, the result of work is more predictable. Despite the fact that we have a lot of work and [each piece is] different, we still have visible style and the client usually [focuses] on it. At the briefing we help the client to see his project on the flip side: we tell how it can be done, we can specify where and how to enhance the visual image."

In order to make this process as seamless as possible, the team need to pull together as one, while focusing on their individual strengths, explains

“It is very important to choose the right designer for the task. Each designer has their strengths. Combining their skills, we achieve the maximum quality for the illustrations”



Intercomp: Created for Intercomp and agency CreativePeople

executive producer Ekaterina Kovaleva. "Every creative process has its own algorithm, and each team member has a specific role in the project. The producer is maybe the most important person, the one who integrates and synchronises the team." Kovaleva's role involves explaining how the image will be created, then estimating and approving a timeline with the client. At Western Jack, each producer works with the art director and together they produce sketches and deliver the work to production. "It is very important to choose the right designer for the task. Each designer has their strengths. Combining their skills, we achieve the maximum quality for the illustrations. Sometimes, for very complex projects, we involve experts from outside: for one project for Snickers we invited a photographer who caught a squirrel in the park; in

another project, we found a decorator who helped us to make a bottle of fruit vodka from berries. The process of creation is usually very limited in time, so it's important to have experience and be fast. Experience helps you to select the most efficient way of implementation, and the speed allows us to make several options and then choose the best."

Western Jack, despite its big projects, works with agencies of all sizes to bring ideas to life. "Big ideas aren't born only in big agencies," says Kovaleva. "But small agencies don't have their own production [team] with a good enough level of quality to make a project at an international level. We want to give even the small agencies the opportunity to make high-end visualisations. Our purpose is to let them compete with huge network agencies, at least in the field of advertising prints."

■ A DAY IN THE LIFE OF EKATERINA KOVALEVA

WESTERN JACK'S EXECUTIVE PRODUCER GOES THROUGH HER DAY



09:00 | BEFORE THE OFFICE

I get messages on my phone even earlier than my alarm clock! The first message is from a client, who has a big time gap between our countries. I check all my emails, then I order a taxi and go to the office.



11:00 | WORKING DAY BEGINS

I check availability of all our designers and get in touch with clients. I usually call our creative director to [set up] meetings about new projects (for example, brainstorming or just to make more exact project demands).



11:30 | CREATIVE PITCH

I have a meeting with our creative director. During the meeting we discuss a project, find references and think about how we want to produce an image. Our colleagues from creative agency CreativePeople will check our thoughts no later than today.

“Photoshop is good for retouching and making images look high quality, because usually render-quality is not enough”



Behind the scenes: This is a picture from a photoshoot behind the scenes, getting imagery for a campaign for Snickers

WESTERN JACK'S TIPS

■ TRY SOMETHING NEW

If you have repeating tasks, it is important to try and solve them in a new way. Today you could try making something in 3D; tomorrow try to repeat the same result by creating an object from paper.

■ DON'T STOP!

There is no such [stage] in visualisation work in which you can just stop. If you see an opportunity to grow, use it.

■ FIND YOUR SPECIALISM

Find what you can do really great and fast. For example, if you can make great glass, work with alcoholic brands; if you're good at hair, fill your portfolio with animals and people.

■ ADOPT SKILL FROM GREATER DESIGNERS

Don't neglect the experience of others. There are a lot of video courses in CGI, which are interesting to watch and learn from, even for very good professionals.

■ DO PERSONAL WORK

Creating [personal] work is a good way to grow. CGI is a business and you can never make a perfect job – there is no time. But for yourself you always have time and it's an opportunity to make something amazing.

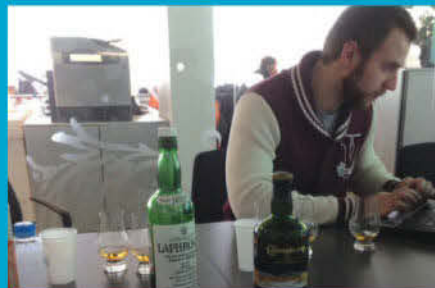


Myagkov: A project for Myagkov vodka. The team at Western Jack undertook the decking, photoshooting and retouching for this visual



13:30 | PHOTO SHOOT

Today's photo session is not usual – we are shooting water splashes for new advertising for an alcohol brand. It's me, an art director, the photographer and an assistant on the stage. I left them at 4pm wet, but satisfied.



16:30 | WORK ON PROJECTS

I take a snack to the café, open my notebook and look over what our designers have done. I send them client's edits and set tasks to our sketcher. One of our clients wants to discuss a project and make whiskey degustation, for which we are going to make a print.



18:00 | AIRPORT TRIP

I go to the airport to pick up a package from Prague – we are making a print with door knockers for one of our clients, and instead of modelling we decided to take a photo of a real antique one.

All images: © Western Jack 2015

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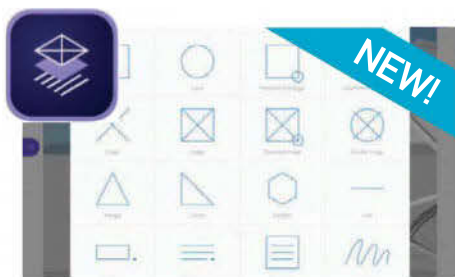
Creative Cloud 2015 is Adobe's flagship release for the year, and this time round it packs in a multitude of new tools and functions for creative professionals.

All of Adobe's major desktop and mobile apps have been given a once-over, improving functionality under the hood and adding new tools to help you achieve more with your imaging software. While Illustrator, Dreamweaver, InDesign, Premiere Pro, Lightroom and After Effects (and their related mobile apps) have all had the CC 2015 treatment too, we'll be concentrating on Photoshop and what its increased

functionality can do for you. Creative Cloud 2015 represents the best of Adobe's work on integrating mobile and desktop workflows, and its focus on digital asset management.

A joined-up strategy between desktop, mobile, assets, the community and the marketplace is at the heart of what Adobe wants to achieve with this release of CC. With Creative Cloud 2015, you now have an end-to-end workflow that gives you access to assets in your Library wherever you are and the ability to start work in one app – mobile or desktop – and seamlessly bounce documents and assets into another. Adobe's

desktop apps now work faster, with some Photoshop tools working up to 120 times faster than they did back in CS6. Better organisation and labelling of assets in your CC Libraries and layer palettes boosts your workflow speed even more, while a new workspace especially for web designers minimises mouse-clicks. New tools make previously long-winded tasks quick and simple, helping you to edit photos and improve images faster than ever before. So fire up CC, make sure you're updated to the latest version and let's look at how you can work smarter.



COMP

Graphic and web designers often start with a basic layout sketch, and this brand-new app will revolutionise the way that you make them. With its own vocabulary of gestures for things like headlines, call-out images and assorted boxout shapes, Comp CC makes these sketches quick and easy to create. Send them over to Photoshop or InDesign and your base layout will arrive ready for you to drop in images and text, instead of having to work up the entire design again.



SKETCH

The perfect start to your workflow, Photoshop Sketch is a sketching tool that gives you access to your custom brushes from Photoshop and Adobe Brush, so digital painters can use their full set of Photoshop brushes on the move.



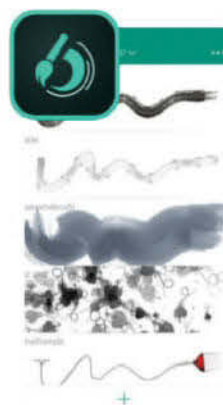
COLOR

A unified colour palette is a must-have when you're working across a range of branding designs or corporate logos. Capture and access colour palettes wherever you are and be confident that you can import them to Photoshop without any shifts in hue or tone across devices.



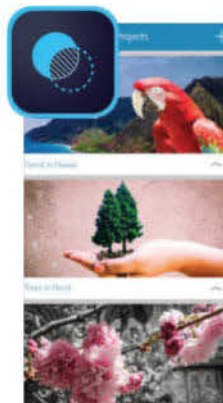
SHAPE

Vector graphics are fantastic assets for Photoshop artwork, and Shape CC lets you capture them by photographing objects. They'll now go straight to your CC Library ready for immediate integration into Photoshop, InDesign and Illustrator, or the Illustrator Draw app.



BRUSH

Custom brushes are useful for all kinds of Photoshop artists and photo editors. Brush CC allows you to create them from anything you can photograph, and now transitioning work that uses them between Photoshop Mix and Photoshop is completely seamless.



MIX

Great for getting a photo composite started, increased compatibility across your CC Libraries means that you can start making a full comp in Photoshop Mix and then bounce it over to Photoshop itself with assets and enhancements intact.

“Excited to finally have Color CC, Brush CC, and Shape CC on my phone. I downloaded Color CC and have been saving and creating colour palettes like mad”



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MOBILE TO DESKTOP

START YOUR ARTWORK ON THE MOVE AND FINISH UP IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN STUDIO, WITHOUT TRANSFERRING ANY FILES

Over the past few years, creatives have lived their lives out of their Dropboxes. We're all familiar with the situation – you start doodling a design in a sketchbook or on a mobile app, and then have to mess around with scanners, cameras or file transfer services to get your sketch from the book or device it started in to Photoshop, where you can finish it off. Along the way you'll typically have to deal with resolution and size issues, file type irregularities or simply running out of storage space. Adobe identified this problem a while ago and has been rolling out solutions ever since – the Ink and Slide iPad stylus and ruler is one example, the Creative Cloud Notebook (made in collaboration with Moleskine and featuring its own app for easy digital transfers) is another.

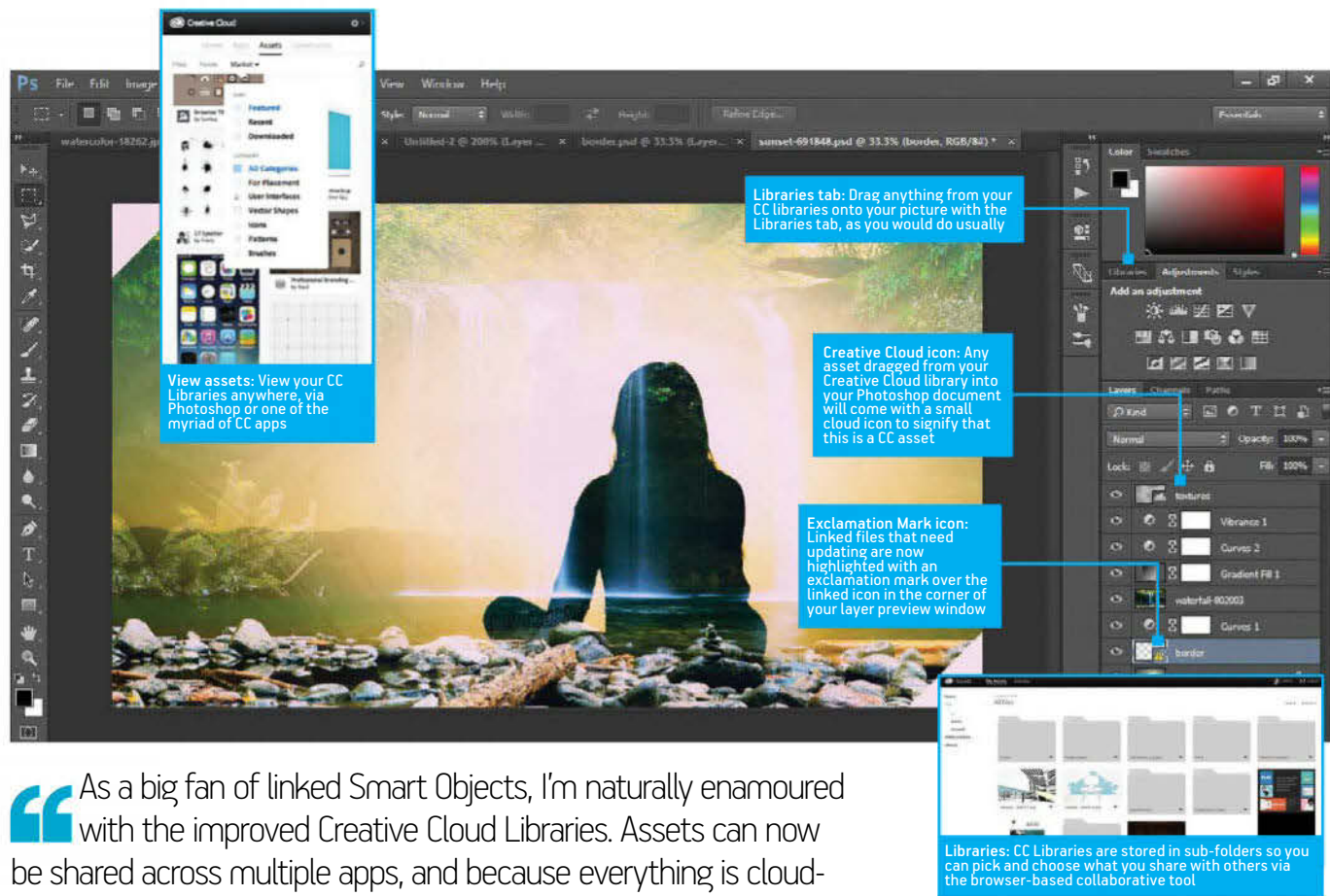
Creative Cloud 2015 streamlines the process even further. Its apps have had a makeover to make them even more compatible with desktop versions of Adobe's software. There have been some casualties along the way – Photoshop Touch was discontinued shortly before the release of Creative Cloud 2015 – but the fallen have made way for new or improved apps and better ways of integrating a mobile and desktop workflow. It's now incredibly easy to transfer work and assets between apps – in many cases it will happen automatically, and Photoshop can notify you when an image or asset has been updated in another app and prompt you to grab the latest version straight from your CC Library.



NOW ON ANDROID!

ADOBE'S PHOTOSHOP BASED CC APPS ARE NOW AVAILABLE ON ANDROID DEVICES

When Adobe first launched its CC apps there was a predictable outcry from users who prefer Android devices to Apple. It's taken a while, but now Color CC, Shape CC, Brush CC and Photoshop Mix are now fully Android-compatible and can be downloaded free from the Google Play store. Like the iOS variants, you'll need a Creative Cloud subscription to get the most from them, especially to use the cross-device tools and asset management that's such a huge part of CC 2015. Adobe has confirmed that other CC apps will be making their way to Android too, so keep an eye out for them!



“As a big fan of linked Smart Objects, I’m naturally enamoured with the improved Creative Cloud Libraries. Assets can now be shared across multiple apps, and because everything is cloud-synced, all instances update upon edit. For a designer like me who works on several fronts, this is a huge blessing.”

ANDRE VILLANUEVA /
WWW.000-000-0000.COM

CREATIVESYNC

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE TECHNOLOGY THAT UNDERPINS CREATIVE CLOUD’S ABILITY TO MANAGE AND TRANSFER YOUR ASSETS AND IMAGES

CreativeSync is a new proprietary technology developed by Adobe, and it’s the engine that runs the almost instantaneous transfer of images and files between apps, and recognises when an image or resource has been updated and a newer version is available. It also features a browser-based collaborative tool that allows you to transfer images and assets not only among your own apps and devices, but also to other collaborators working within a Creative Cloud environment. It’s not just limited to Photoshop either – all CC apps, both mobile and desktop, now make use of CreativeSync to improve their performance and your workflow.

CreativeSync lets you know via the Layers palette when an asset that you’re working with is from the Creative Cloud – a stock photo from Adobe Stock, for example, or a file a collaborator has shared with you – so you

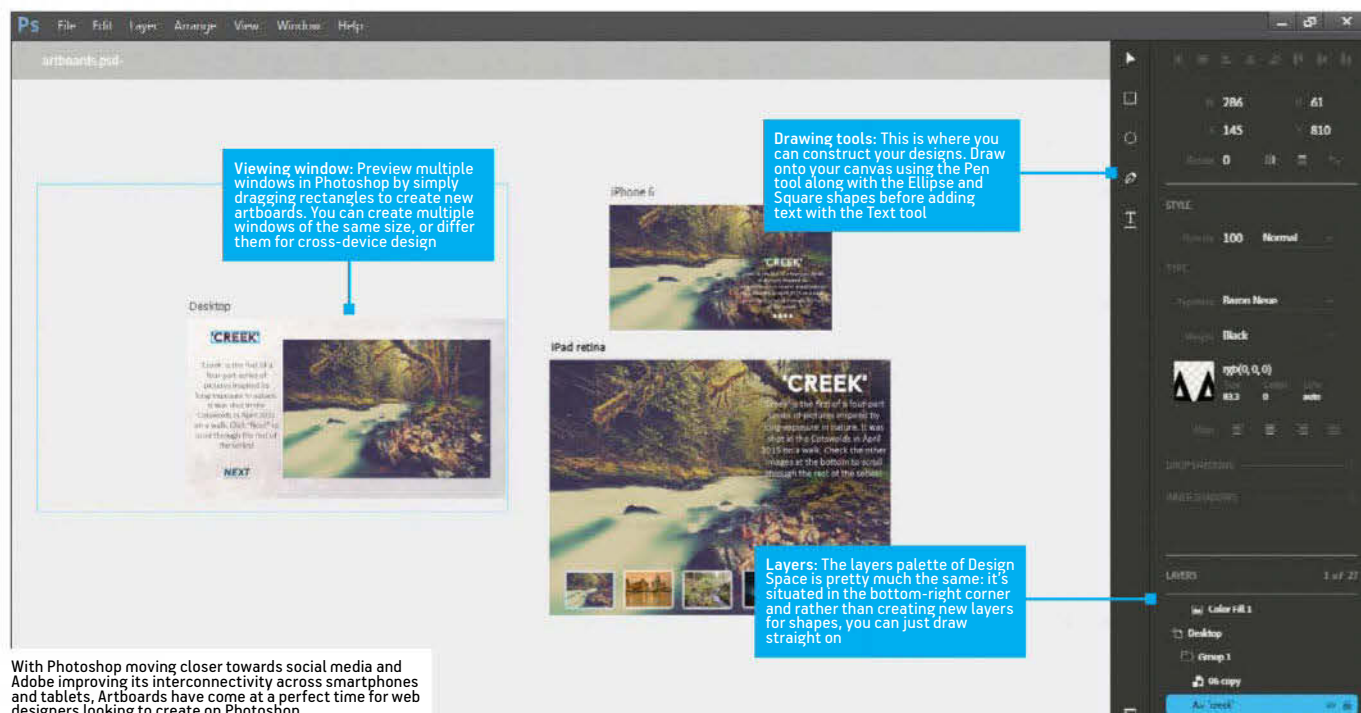
can see at a glance what parts of your image are from the cloud and what’s from your local hard-drive. A little cloud icon represents the assets from your CC Library. This is really handy because you can see instantly what you’ll need to send from local storage to your CC Library in order to keep on working on an image when you’re away from your main, desktop version of Photoshop.

When an asset is imported from a CC Library it’s now a Smart Object by default, meaning that you can edit and change it non-destructively. CreativeSync will tell you automatically if an asset that you’re working with has been updated. An exclamation-mark icon (very like the broken link icon in InDesign) will automatically show up in your Layers palette next to the asset in question, advising you that you need to re-link it via the Creative Cloud to get the latest version of it.

CREATIVESYNC ACROSS ADOBE APPS

SYNC FILES AND ASSETS BETWEEN PHOTOSHOP AND OTHER ADOBE DESKTOP APPS

CreativeSync doesn’t just link files between mobile and desktop apps – it also links them between Adobe’s main programs. This is incredibly useful for artists who work across Photoshop and Illustrator, designers who combine Photoshop and InDesign and web designers working across Photoshop and Dreamweaver. Exactly the same rules and icons apply as the ones used when sharing content between desktop and mobile – CreativeSync advises you when a link needs updating and when an asset comes from a CC Library. This not only reduces the amount of time you spend bouncing assets between apps (and converting them to the correct file format when needed), it also speeds up collaborative workflows, for example between web coders and UI/UX designers.



“I was waiting for Adobe to apply something like Artboards to Photoshop, and they finally did; after using it for years in Illustrator it's finally simpler to create mock-ups across platforms without using my own pre-made template files”



ROLF ANDERS JENSEN /
WWW.ROLFJENSEN.NO

ARTBOARDS

THE ARTBOARDS FEATURE IS INTRODUCED TO PHOTOSHOP IN CC 2015. FIND OUT HOW TO USE IT

Artboards are a new and very exciting feature in Photoshop, although they're not designed to work quite the same way as they do in Illustrator.

In fact, in Photoshop Artboards are used primarily for web design, enabling designers to view multiple versions of the same site within the same document. This means that you can line up a desktop, tablet and smartphone layout for a website side-by-side and view them together, ensuring that your designs are consistent across different types of website.

There are other ways that you can use them, however. Artists who work on trading cards will find that they're a great way to set up a consistent template that artwork can then be dropped into. They're also great if you want to compare before-and-after images without having to tile windows within Photoshop. Another great use for them is when you want to set out multiple

moodboards of reference images, for example when you're working on a complex painting or design.

There's a strong focus on web design in this iteration of CC, and this is borne out by the new Design Space workspace, which we show you how to enable on the next page. Design Space is a stripped-down workspace designed specifically for web designers, after Adobe identified that they spent a lot of time clicking around to find commonly used tools that were buried under menu trees.

Design Space is currently in Preview (or beta) mode, and it does warn you that (as of July 2015), it's only really stable with one Artboard inside it at the moment. Adobe is very interested in getting feedback on this new workspace though, so if you're a web, UI or UX designer, give it a try and send Adobe your feedback to help it evolve into an even better creative tool.



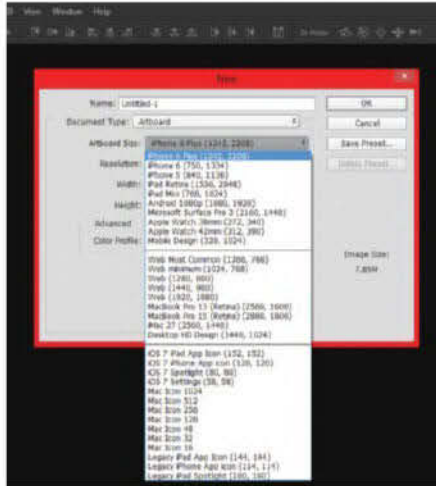
DEVICE PREVIEW

THE PREVIEW CC APP HELPS YOU TO VIEW YOUR WEB DESIGNS LIVE ON YOUR MOBILE

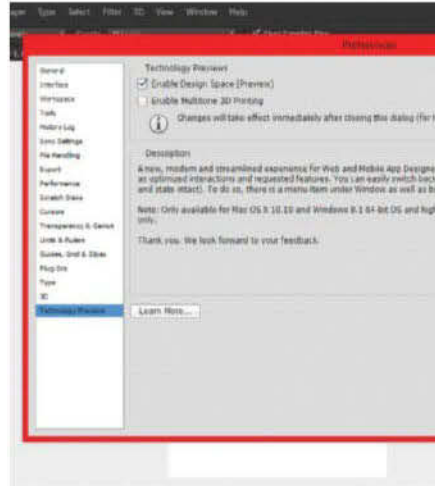
When you're designing a website it's helpful to be able to see it the way most of its users will – on a tablet or smartphone screen. A new app allows you to do exactly that with the minimum of fuss, although at the moment it's only available for iOS devices. You can connect an iPod or iPhone via USB or Wi-Fi – just make sure that you're signed in to Creative Cloud, have Photoshop up and running with the Device Preview panel open, and have the Preview CC app running on the device you want to preview content on. If you've got multiple Artboards in a document, Photoshop and Preview CC will automatically work out which one is the correct size for your device. You can also scroll through multiple Artboards. Most importantly, changes that you make to the design in Photoshop are updated and displayed live in Preview CC.

SET UP AND USE ARTBOARDS

HOW TO USE THIS NEW PHOTOSHOP FEATURE



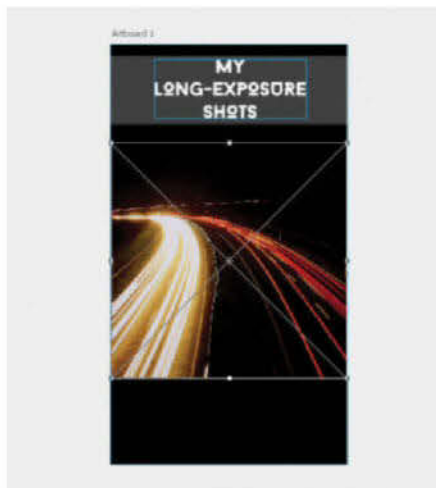
01 | CREATE A NEW DOCUMENT To begin using Artboards, start off as you usually would on Photoshop by going to File>New. In the dropdown menu that reads Document Type, select Artboards; it has a section of the menu all to itself. Here, you can choose all kinds of default sizes for designing web elements onto, ranging from iOS device screens, to Android, Microsoft and even icon sizes. When creating, you can insert another Artboard of a different size later, to compare as you work.



02 | ENABLE DESIGN SPACE To enable Design Space, go to Edit>Preferences>Technology Previews, and here you will find a check-box for the ability to switch from the standard Photoshop space to Design Space; after checking this box, you'll just need to go to Window>Design Space or hit Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Opt to toggle between previews. The sleeker, more minimal Design Space omits some of the commands and tools of regular Photoshop, but you can switch back using the icon by the side of the layers panel.



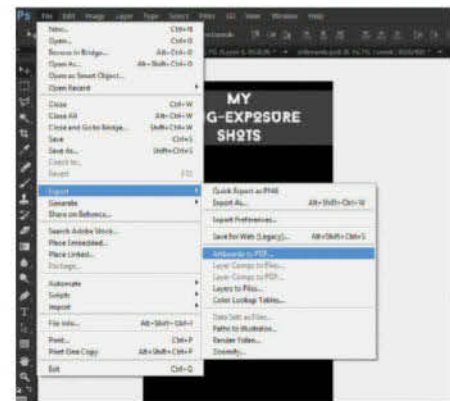
03 | EXPERIMENT WITH TEXT AND SHAPES Simply drag a shape or use the Pen tool to start designing straight onto the Artboards. Create first and then edit second by navigating to the right-hand panel, where you can pick colour, change text font and size, and perfect positioning and opacity of your shapes. Transform, flip and rotate objects using the icons located at the top of the panel; the Layers panel is extremely stripped down too.



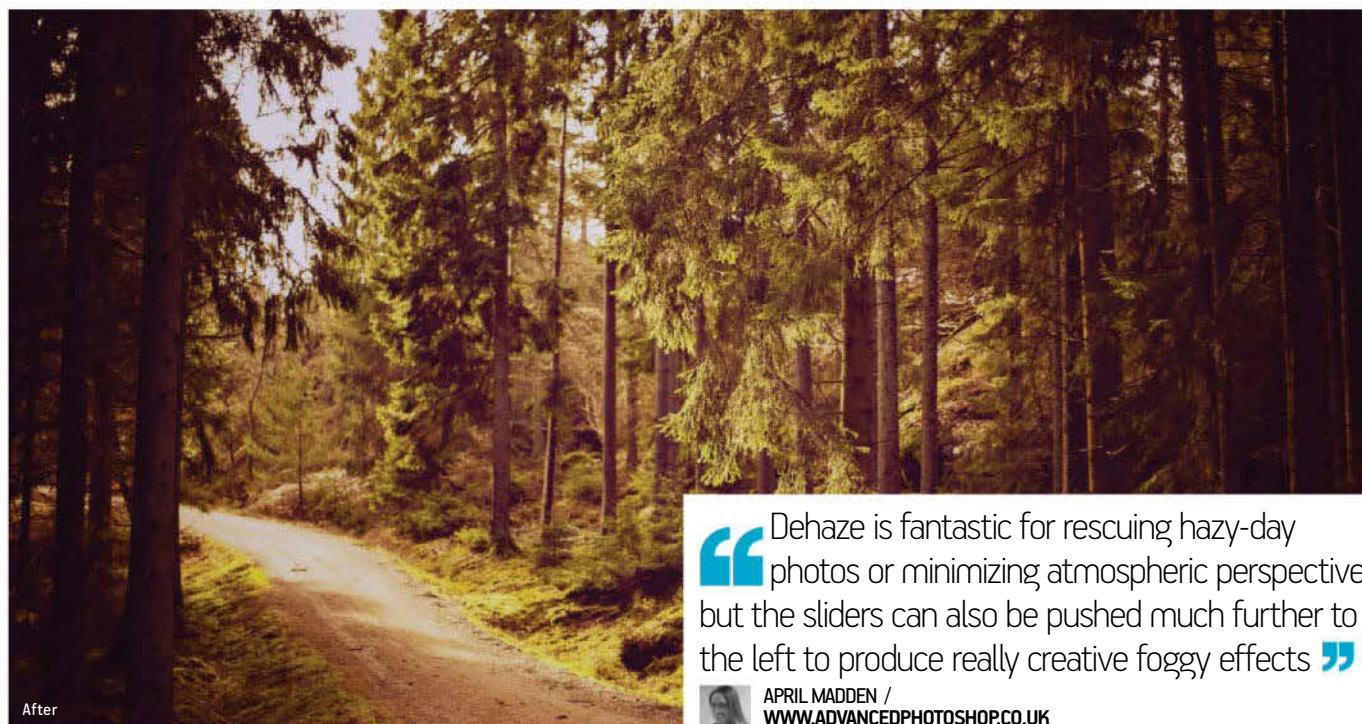
04 | PLACE IMAGES INTO DESIGN SPACE Unlike the standard viewing space of Photoshop, Design Space isn't intended for touching up or working on photos. If you wish to incorporate pictures or composites in your app design, create them outside of Design Space first, and then import them by going to File>Place Linked. Obviously, your image here will be non-editable, just as with the regular Photoshop preview space.



05 | GET CLOSER ACCURACY The precision with which you can create in Design Space is an upgrade on the regular viewing space, to help with the more meticulous nature of web design. Moving objects is a lot easier, and nudging is permanently accompanied by the pink distance and positioning parameters to give you complete control. Simply drag to move objects from one Artboard to another if you need to, and use the subheadings in the layers panel to determine which Artboard is comprised of which elements.



06 | EXPORT TO PDF Press the icon in the bottom-right next to the Layers panel to exit from this preview. Head to File>Export>Artboards to PDF to create a PDF your final designs. You can choose to either export only selected Artboards from here, and whether or not you want to run the PDF like a slideshow and if you want the PDF to loop after the last slide. This is a particularly good presentational option for web designers, but the ability to save to other picture file formats, as as PSD, is still available simply by saving via File>Save.



After

“Dehaze is fantastic for rescuing hazy-day photos or minimizing atmospheric perspective, but the sliders can also be pushed much further to the left to produce really creative foggy effects”

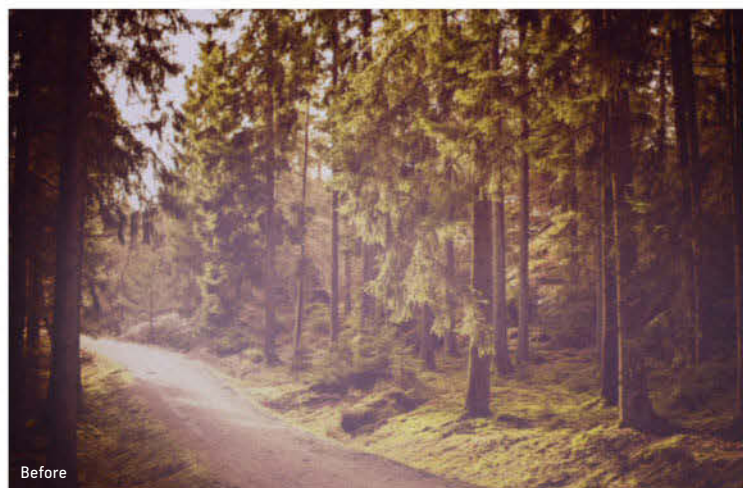


APRIL MADDEN /
WWW.ADVANCEDPHOTOSHOP.CO.UK



ADD HAZE

By turning the slider down to the opposite end of the filter, you can add haze. Grain is great for an eerie, abandoned look; try duplicating your picture and masking haze in as a final touch for composites.



Before

THE DEHAZE TOOL

IMPROVE YOUR SCENIC PHOTOS WITH THIS INTELLIGENT TOOL FOR ADDING AND REMOVING ATMOSPHERIC EFFECTS

The Camera RAW filter is constantly evolving, and Photoshop founder Thomas Knoll can these days be found as a key member of the RAW team. The Dehaze tool had long been talked about, and sure enough, the latest update to the Creative Cloud sees both Photoshop and Lightroom being given a brand new tool for photographers to play with. Is it as powerful as first thought though?

The Dehaze tool does exactly what it says on the tin. It clears the haze in foggy landscape shots or it can be used to add haze by reversing the slider in the opposite direction. It's a

powerful new addition to the Camera RAW filter, as it's one that can add in detail, saturation and markedly improved contrast in a single click of a cursor; combine it with the grain and vignette options, and you can up the retro atmosphere in your photo. It's located under the FX tabs of the RAW filter, and as well as being a must-have new toy for seasoned professional photographers to correct all kinds of hazy photos, the Dehaze could become a great touching-up tool for composite creators to give their final pictures a light, misty ambience. But how the Dehaze tool can find so much detail

from such bright spots in photos is all based on how light is transmitted, and according to Adobe's Julieanne Kost, "the Dehaze tries to estimate light that is lost due to absorption and scattering through the atmosphere." Haze that causes pictures to look over-exposed need not be a problem anymore, as the Dehaze can cut right through the fog and correct all kinds of levels, something Photoshop previously struggled with. For the best possible results though, make sure you correct the light and dark balance in your pictures before using the filter.



EXTREME HAZE

Choose an extremely hazy picture and turn the slider up to the upper reaches, depending of course on what exact figure suits the picture. Add a slight grain if need be to bring sharpness back into the detail



LIGHT HAZE

Turn the Dehaze slider up to no more than 30 to deal with any light haze in a picture. This is also a good setting for correcting overexposure, and it can inject detail back into your pictures.



TRANSFORM ON DROP

THIS ENHANCED FUNCTION ON THE CONTENT-AWARE MOVE TOOL MAKES PLACEMENT EDITS QUICK AND SIMPLE

The Content-Aware is an almost invaluable feature to many photo editors. Its magical fill properties have been a reliable friend to Photoshop users for years now; it seems like a tool that can't really be built upon, but with the latest Creative Cloud update, there's a handy new transform-style tool for making life even easier when using the Content-Aware to touch up your photos.

The new Transform On Drop check-box gives you even more control over Content-Aware. Content-Aware is used primarily for a single layer, and it feels like one of the most over-simplified tools in the program. Before this latest CC update, if

you wanted an object to be a different size or shape, elsewhere in the picture, your best bet would have been to use the Content-Aware Move tool before hitting Ctrl/right-click and selecting Free Transform. This would've set your object in the picture before you had the chance to resize or skew it.

Now, it's just a case of checking the Transform On Drop icon on the top bar, located next to Sample All Layers. This will give you the Transform handles on each corner of your chosen selection, free for you to resize or skew as you wish. The advantages of this brand new tool are obvious; there's the ability

to be even more precise when moving subjects – some users might have even have combined the Expand and Move tools within Content-Aware Move in the past – and you'll soon find yourself transforming every object you drop when using Content-Aware Move.

If you're using the tool as a blemish cover-up, there's no underrating the new Transform On Drop option either, as it enables you to replace parts of a photo even more accurately. It's a subtle step forward for Content-Aware, but one that you won't believe you ever lived without this time next year.



Before



After



01 MAKE YOUR SELECTION

Just as before the CC update, start your Content-Aware Move by making a selection of the object that you wish to move across the picture. Decide on whether you want to adjust the Structure or Colour blending of the object that you're moving, and click Content-Aware Move tool before starting to drag your object across your picture to the desired location.



02 MOVE AND TRANSFORM

This is where the new tool comes in. Make sure that the Transform On Drop check-box at the top of the window is checked, and you'll see the Transform handles appear. Just as you would with Free Transform, make your edits by stretching the corners of this selection. Once you're finished transforming and skewing, simply hit Enter or double-click your selection to save the changes you've made to the object.



03 TOUCH UP AFTERWARDS

It really is as simple as that: the new capabilities make it even easier to control your Content-Aware. Finally, make any last-minute retouching edits that you might want to using whichever tools you prefer. Obviously, using the Colour and Structure options in the top bar of the tool are great for blending but it's sometimes worth going a little deeper with the Clone tool to make sure all edges are perfect.



“Photoshop CC 2015 makes an otherwise convoluted and time-consuming process a lot less complicated. A major selling point”



REBEKKA HEARL /
[HTTP://REINCARNATEDPARANO.DEVIANTART.COM](http://REINCARNATEDPARANO.DEVIANTART.COM)

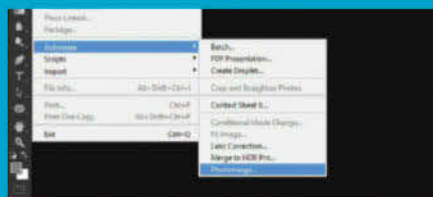
MERGE PANORAMA WITH CONTENT-AWARE FILL

STITCHING PANORAMAS BECOMES SIMPLER WITH THIS BRAND NEW TOOL

Creating panoramas used to be one of the more time-consuming composite tasks in Photoshop. There are numerous ways that you can create them with a series of portrait-orientated photos, but unfortunately there had never been a definitive way to create the perfect panorama. The most likely way to create a panorama would probably be with the Photomerge function, but with the latest update to CC, Adobe are trying to tackle the blank pixels around the edges that you traditionally end up with when creating Photoshop panoramas.

As previously announced as one of the newest features with the latest upgrade of Lightroom, along with high dynamic range photo capabilities, Photoshop now has an improved panorama ability. Adobe are now one step closer to making panoramas a single click away: in fact, depending on how close together your source pictures are, you might find that it only takes checking a single box. The new panorama Content-Aware feature is situated within the Photomerge option of the program, and as the name suggests, it can fill in all the dead space in your panorama with cloned content from the surrounding areas of the picture. Although it isn't exactly a perfect fix for every panorama though, it's a marked improvement for you to then touch up and fix to flawlessness afterwards.

Some may say that this has been a long time coming for Photoshop CC. Photoshop Elements has had this tool for a while now, and whilst there are other advanced ways to create the effect in CC, the Content-Aware check-box is a welcome addition to the program; not only for photographers out there wanted to create high resolution panoramas of their work, but other kinds of artists such as web designers who want to work in widescreen.



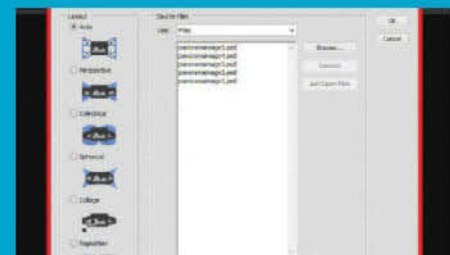
01 | HEAD TO PHOTOMERGE

To start the panorama process, go to File>Automate>Photomerge, which will create a new document, once you choose the photos to actually create the picture. If you've never created a panorama in Photoshop before, this is perhaps the easiest way to start. It picks the images that you want to place into the mix, organises them in an arranged order and then stitches them together. Adobe has similar tools in both Lightroom and Photoshop Elements.



03 | CREATE THE PANORAMA

Make sure Perspective is clicked in the Photomerge dialog box before you go ahead and click OK. Once completed, you'll end up with each of your selected photos arranged and stretched into a panorama, hopefully seamlessly at the edges, thanks to the Content-Aware Fill Transparent Areas check-box. It's unlikely though that your image will be perfect unless you picked minimal start images in the first place.



02 | SELECT YOUR FILES

Here, you have the option of choosing an entire folder for importing into your panorama or just a select few files: we've gone for five pictures that make up a panorama. Click the check-box that reads Content-Aware Fill Transparent Areas at the bottom of the dialog box: this is the tool that's going to complete the panorama and save you a lot of time editing the corners of the composite in the long run.



04 | FINISH OFF WITH A CLONE

Finish your panorama by making the necessary touch-ups to make your panorama seem natural and realistic. A common problem with the Photomerge option is that the edges of the panorama don't meet up exactly at the seams; use the Clone Stamp tool on a low opacity, as you would with any other retouching task, just to give the panorama soft edges all over.

MULTIPLE INSTANCES OF LAYER STYLES

REPEAT THE SAME LAYER STYLE ON A SINGLE LAYER UP TO TEN TIMES FOR INCREDIBLE CREATIVE EFFECTS

“I’m really enjoying CC 2015’s ability to add multiple layer styles to the same layer. When making effects in my paintings, like stars and flames, it used to be tedious to edit the different layer effects individually. I hope that they do something similar for the adjustment tools, that’d be fantastic”



PIPER THIBODEAU /
WWW.PIPERTHIBODEAU.COM

Layer styles are invaluable to artists who work not just with compositions, but anything from digital paintings to typography. They add colour, tone or shape, and best of all, they’re non-destructive, making editing around them easy too.

But as simple as layer styles are to add to your work, choosing exactly the right feel you want one to give has always been slightly more difficult. Prior to this CC update, layer styles were somewhat limiting, in that you could only apply one of each to your piece; while some Photoshop users would’ve simply

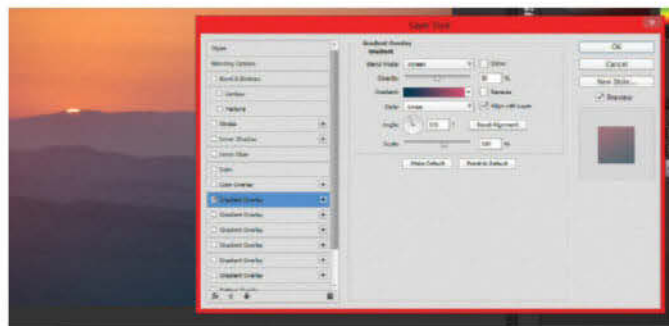
duplicated layers here and used the Fill property to rectify the problem, there was no definitive fix for this problem.

Now, the Blending Options dialog box has been given a subtle but stylish new look, and most importantly you now have the ability to add as many of the same layer style to your one layer. This can be activated by using the + button to the side of the layer styles that now carry this new feature; these are Stroke, Inner Shadow, Colour Overlay, Gradient Overlay and Drop Shadow.

So when will this new feature come in useful?

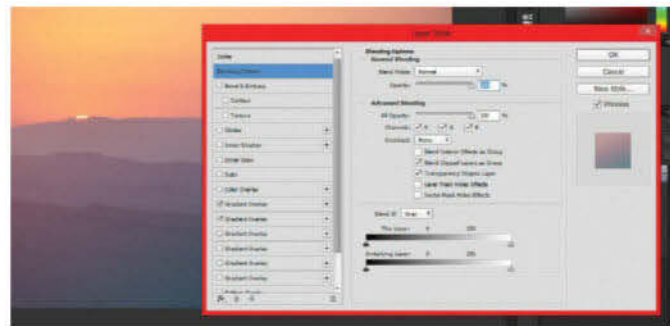
Compositions obviously require layer styles at times so this will simply tidy up exactly what’s being added to what layer, but this is probably most beneficial to text layers; adding multiple gradient overlays or colour overlays to a line of text might eliminate the need for clipping masks when working with typography.

There’s no doubt though that this new approach to layer styles will revolutionise the way you think about certain compositions, giving you the power to keep everything on one layer without duplicates.



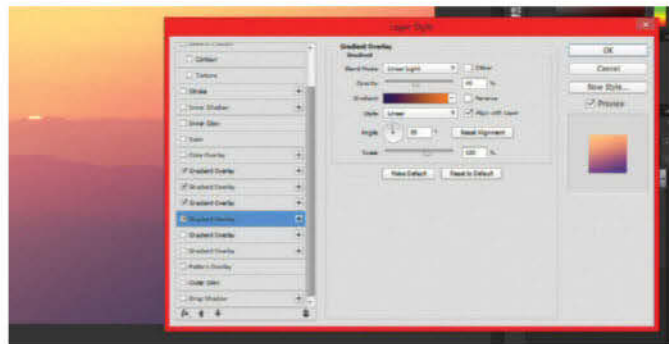
01 | SELECT LAYER STYLE

To start adding layer styles, approach this the same as you would if you were only adding one style. Right-click your layer and go to Blending Options, before choosing the layer style that you wish to add to the layer: we’ve gone with a gradient overlay to add a different colour tint to this picture. Select your layer style options as you usually would.



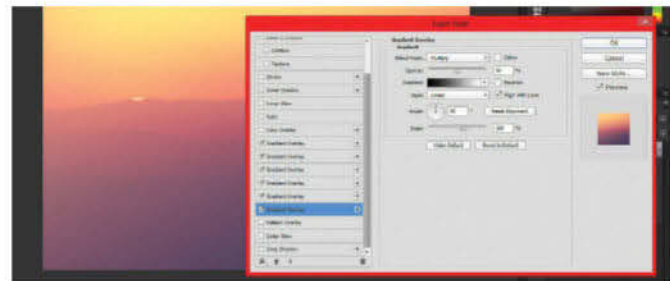
02 | ADD MORE LAYERS

After adding a single layer style to your work, this is where the new feature comes in; simply click the + icon to the side of your chosen layer style and you can add a second. This works with up to ten layer styles and by pressing the + icon, you’re duplicating the same style that you’ve just inputted. There’s still the option to add other layer styles on top of this, too.



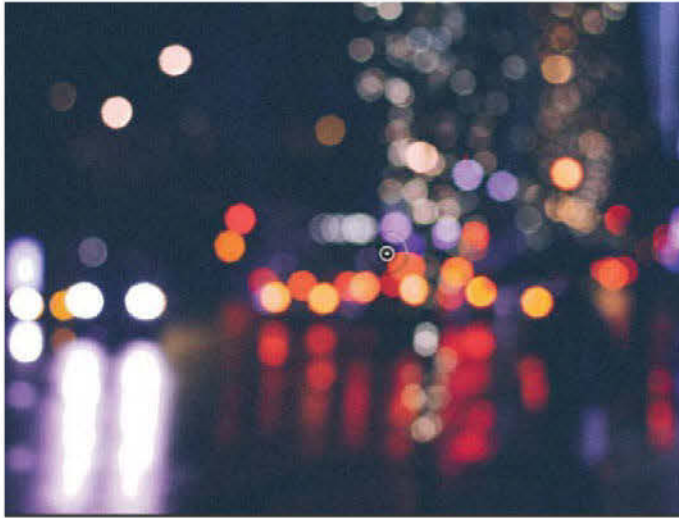
03 | BEGIN THE EDIT

Continue to add more layer styles by using the + icon to duplicate, before you edit each one individually. Perhaps you have a specific set of values you wish to input – maybe a particular arrangement of gradients or you want a drop shadow to be cast in more than one direction across your picture – or perhaps you just wish to experiment with colour, tone and style to see what you can create.



04 | MULTIPLE LAYERS MADE EASY

It’s unlikely that you’ll ever need ten of the same kind of layer style on the one layer that you’re editing, but thanks to the CC update, you have a little more freedom with exactly what you want to add to each layer. There’s no more need for duplicating the same layer and reducing the fill, and the Copy Layer Style function still works the same as before. Unfortunately, though this update does tidy up your Blending Options, there isn’t the option to remove layer styles once you’ve added them as yet.



RESTORE NOISE IN THE BLUR GALLERY

INCREASE REALISM IN ACTION IMAGES

Noise and blurring are two things often considered to be polar ends of a spectrum in Photoshop: if you want to get rid of noise in a picture, it can be a good idea to blur it, and if you want to get rid of blurring in a picture, sharpening techniques can produce an aesthetic noisy effect.

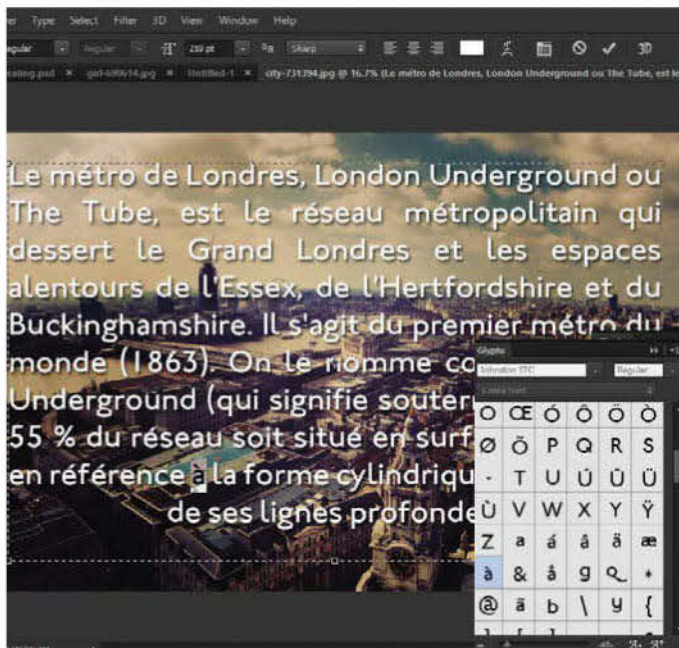
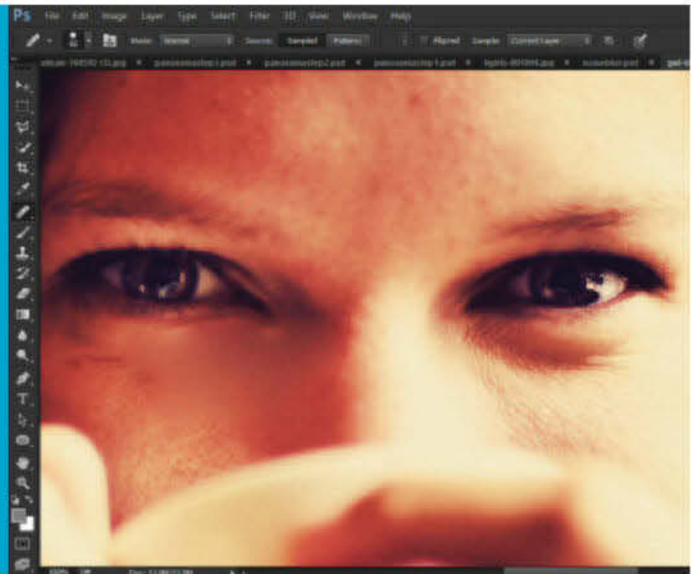
With the new CC update, those boundaries aren't quite as clear-cut anymore, at least for the new abilities within the Blur Gallery. A tab now exists with Noise on it; just as with the noise feature in the Camera RAW filter, you can scale up the amount of noise that you want to see along with size, roughness and even colour and highlights. This is a great new feature for when you want to retain some of the grain in a picture that's becoming overly soft.

SPEED UP EDITS WITH THE REPAIR TOOLS

PERFORMANCE INCREASES MAKE HEALING AND PATCH TOOLS MUCH FASTER

As well as the nice addition of Transform On Drop to the Content-Aware family, the Patch tool, Healing Brush and Spot Healing Brush have all been updated with Mercury Graphics Engine enhancements. In previous versions of Photoshop, while using the Healing Brush, a translucent grey area would be visible, along with a progress bar to tell you how the work was coming along.

You can now see how your Healing Brush is working as you work, and Adobe claims to have sped up the Spot Healing Brush and Patch tool, making them 120 times faster than they were in CS6. Not only is this fantastic news for retouching artists who frequently use the Healing, Spot Healing and Patch tools, this update might see different kinds of artists trying out these tools as alternative quick fixes.



USE GLYPHS IN TYPOGRAPHIC PIECES

GET EASY ACCESS TO SPECIAL CHARACTERS AND OTHER FONT FEATURES

Previously with older versions of Photoshop, there was no support for special characters within fonts. Illustrator was one such Adobe program that came with a Glyphs panel, but the only way to add special characters into a text box in Photoshop would have been to copy and paste a character into your chosen document.

Now, the Glyphs panel has come to Photoshop CC, and can be activated simply by going to the Window menu and selecting Glyphs. This gives you the option of inserting any special character from the entire alphabet of that font – providing of course that your chosen font has the character you're looking for – just as Illustrator could manage before.

Whilst this is a great new addition for users of Photoshop whose first language may not be English, it's also a useful little extra to anyone wanting to input random text into a picture that might contain special characters. Web designers might find this particularly useful.



“This news promises to shake the photographic market, because this tool offers a very efficient photo search from the new Adobe image gallery. Also you can create an exclusive picture library for each job, that will optimise your time and helps you organise your files”



RODRIGO MARINELLI /
RODRIGO_MARINELLI.PROSITE.COM

GET STOCK IMAGES STRAIGHT FROM PHOTOSHOP WITH ADOBE STOCK

STOCK IMAGES ARE NOW FULLY INTEGRATED INTO THE CREATIVE CLOUD, PROMISING GREATER EASE OF USE FOR ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS

When Adobe purchased image bank Fotolia for \$800 million in January 2015 we knew that something was afoot, and speculation soon turned to Adobe making its own entrance into the stock photo marketplace. This is exactly what it's done. Adobe's offering gives the Creative Cloud user a little more than a regular image library though – with all the work that's been done to expedite asset transfers via the Creative Cloud, it's only natural that Adobe Stock ties into this too. In fact, Adobe Stock is the first image marketplace to be integrated with the creative tools that it's used with.

You can browse for Adobe Stock images via the website (stock.adobe.com) but you can also access Adobe Stock straight from Photoshop using the CC Libraries palette. Once there, you can browse for images to use in your work, and thanks to some clever coding Adobe Stock is bright enough to help identify other images in a

similar vein – not just using metadata like most other stock sites, but also based on the colours in a photo, whether it includes people, and major identifiable features in an image, such as mountains. This makes the process of finding the right stock image for your composite or design faster and more streamlined.

“Adobe Stock extends Creative Cloud's value as a vibrant global marketplace,” explained David Wadhvani, senior vice president, Digital Media at Adobe. “85 per cent of customers who purchase stock images use Adobe creative tools. The deep integration with our latest Creative Cloud desktop apps, including Photoshop and InDesign, makes buying and using stock photos incredibly easy. At the same time, our customers – the best photographers and designers on the planet – will have the opportunity to contribute millions of new photos and images to Adobe Stock. This is really going to raise the bar in the world of stock content.”

ADOBE STOCK PRICE PLANS

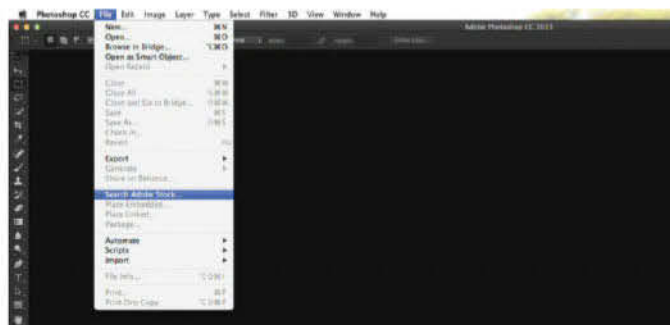
COMPETITIVELY PRICED SINGLE IMAGES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS COULD CHALLENGE SOME OF THE INDUSTRY HEAVYWEIGHTS

There are three ways that you can use Adobe Stock, each one tailored to a different kind of creative with different image requirements.

For home and hobby users who will primarily work with free microstock and only occasionally invest in premium stock images, single images can be purchased for a one-off rate of £5.99 a pop, which is better value than many other premium stock sites.

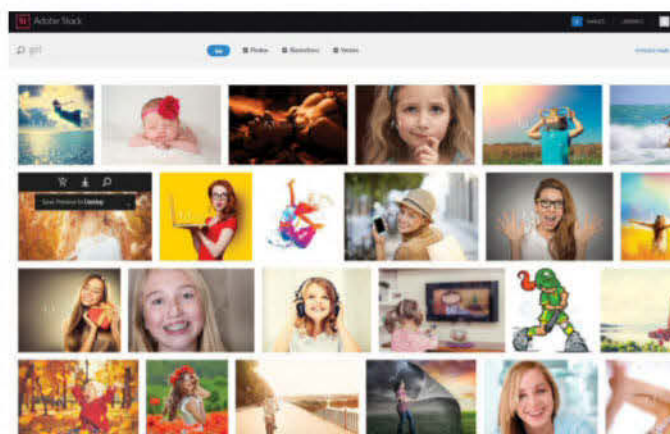
For small studios and freelancers who'll use a few images per month, a subscription to download ten images a month is available for £29.99. If you're a subscriber to CC – either the full package or the Photography Plan of Photoshop and Lightroom – you'll get a third off, making this just £19.99.

For the large commercial studios that work with stock images day in, day out, a subscription covering 750 images a month for £199.99 is available. Both subscription plans will also carry over any unused image allowance from one month to the next, for up to a year – something no other stock site offers.



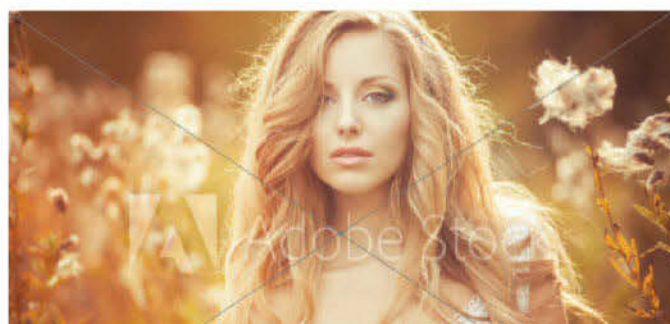
01 | LAUNCH ADOBE STOCK

As Adobe look to move all of its biggest apps, features and Creative Cloud services into the same places to improve interconnectivity, CC subscribers will be pleased to know that Creative Cloud is at the heart of this new Photoshop update. Look to the right-hand panel of Photoshop, near the Libraries tab, and you'll see the St icon to launch Stock; otherwise go to File>Search Adobe Stock to start looking for images.



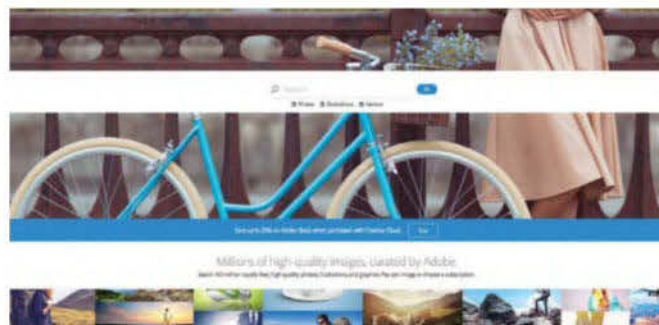
03 | SEARCH AND SAVE

Search with Stock and you'll have thousands, sometimes millions of results. The layout as you can see adheres to Adobe's beautiful light typefaces, and every preview image is watermarked with the new Stock logo. Hover over your image and you'll be prompted to either buy a license for this particular picture, search similar images, or save a preview to your desktop. Click the arrow next to the option for saving to Desktop. Here, you can save to your library.



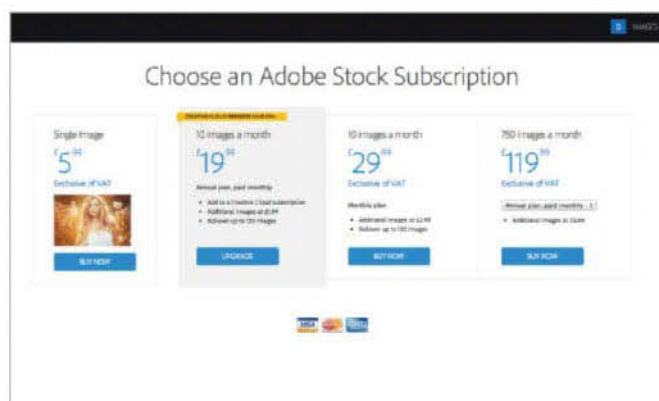
05 | EXPERIMENT WITH PREVIEWS

You can save any preview of any stock picture to your library, and drag it into your projects to work with, straight from the Libraries tab. This will give you a perfect idea of exactly how the image will look in your document; this means that you don't have to buy pictures from Stock to experiment with in your work, you can use the previews, and buy them once you're sure. The picture will update to remove the watermark when purchased.



02 | BROWSE THE SITE ONLINE

Launching Adobe Stock from within Photoshop will fire up your browser to the Stock site, and there is of course the option to upgrade your CC plan to include a certain number of images from Stock every month with your other Creative Cloud services. If you still haven't upgraded to CC though, fear not: going to stock.adobe.com will also bring up Adobe Stock, and you can still purchase images individually.



04 | CHOOSE YOUR PLAN

If you click to buy the image, you'll be taken to a screen that asked you if you want to choose a subscription plan. If you're not already signed up with CC, you can buy the image as a one-off for just £5.99. Creative Cloud members save 33 per cent however by choosing to sign up with the 10 Images A Month plan, for an additional £19.99 a month. Buying extra images than your subscription allows costs less with each plan too, and any credits you don't use for the year get carried over for one year only.

CONTRIBUTE TO ADOBE STOCK

HOW DOES ADOBE STOCK WORK OUT FOR CREATIVES SELLING THEIR IMAGES?

Adobe points out that its community is one of the most creative and talented in the world and that it's focused on rewarding them with a premium for their creative work. So selling your photos or artwork on Adobe Stock could potentially offer you a better profit than some of the other stock sites out there. Adobe will pay stock providers 33 per cent of the price of each item they sell (most other sites offer 25 per cent) and there's no exclusivity clause, meaning that you can still sell your images on other stock sites too. For the moment, stock providers will still upload via the old Fotolia website, so you'll need to make sure you're registered at [Fotolia.com](https://www.fotolia.com) if you want to sell your images via Adobe Stock.

20 TIPS FOR FLAWLESS PHOTO EDITS

PHOTOSHOP EXPERTS REVEAL PROFESSIONAL TIPS TO HELP YOU ENHANCE PHOTO-BASED ARTWORK


01. KEEP EDITS REALISTIC

LEWIS MOORHEAD (WWW.FLEWDESIGNS.COM) IS A CREATIVE RETOUCHER. HE EXPLAINS HOW HE EDITED THIS IMAGE TO SHOW A SURREAL SCENE WHILE REMAINING REALISTIC

Smart Object: "I converted the image into a Smart Object just in case I wanted to amend it later and used the Puppet Warp tool to bend the tree as much as I wanted. I also increased the Expansion to keep the tree's features sharp"

Effective mud: "To create the look of effective mud, I put mud on a white background, then placed the image over the wheel, changing the blending mode to Multiply. I also bent it using the Warp tool to make it bend around the wheel"

Hue/Saturation: "The original colour of the grass was a rich green. To change this I used a Hue/Saturation layer focusing on the green, but also selectively added in more greens to get a bigger range. To do this I adjusted the white bars"



Correct perspective: "To place text or symbols in the correct perspective on any feature, whether it is a phone or a building, I use the Vanishing Point filter on a new layer and drew the area in the correct perspective. I then copy and pasted the banana into the filter and inside the box, which placed it in the correct perspective"

Sharpening: "To sharpen the image I used a High Pass filter. I duplicated the flattened image changing the blending mode to Soft Light/Overlay. I converted to black-and-white, then used Filter>Other>High Pass. This way you can see in real time how sharp you are making it"



© Tom Anders

02. USE COLOR BALANCE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Getting colour right in photo editing is extremely important, but Photoshop has plenty of built-in tools to help you achieve great effects every time. Freelance creative and student Tom Anders Watkins (www.tomanders.com) has high praises for the Color Balance tool – a simple yet effective solution to achieving great colour. "You can significantly change the mood and feel of any image with a couple of slight tweaks. Granted that the image is exposed correctly, Color Balance, if used correctly, will help add an extra dynamic to most photographs.

"This is a photograph I shot in Finland of my little brother throwing rocks into a frozen lake. I wanted to accentuate the cold (blues) and give the photograph more of a dusky, evening feel (purples and reds), [which was] done by playing with the sliders. To add a little more advanced colour correction, I often use the Selective Color tool to get the right tone for more specific colours.

"It's easy to overdo colour sometimes – with great power comes great responsibility so to speak – and there's a fine line [between] making a photograph looking too Photoshopped. A natural, realistic look is what will make your audience feel like they are there. If I'm not sure, what I'll sometimes do if the image is particularly tricky, is make a couple of different versions, then flick through them. Through comparison I can often tell which version feels right."

03. TOP TIPS FOR PERFECT FASHION EDITING



Retouch with care: "Retouching is a powerful tool, and good retouching can create a completely new look for a picture. I usually have a good look at the photo before any editing. Even before the photoshoot, I usually know what I want to



© Photographer – Vitalij Sidorovic
Model – Kristina Lipinskaite
MUA – Make Up Artist Ernesta
Assistant – Monika Alijauskaite

achieve. It is always good to see if you can get something more out of the photo with editing. Most importantly, do not overdo it; great retouching is when people cannot see it was retouched."



© Photographers: Vitalij Sidorovic & Monika Alijauskaite
Make up and Style: Make Up Artist Ernesta
Hairstyle: Irmante Petrilyonyte

Develop a style: "I always have the same sets and even same tools when editing my pictures. It makes the process quicker, as well as [allowing me to] keep the same style and quality throughout the work. If a picture still does not look right, try adding something else, but make sure it is still within your style. Maintaining the same look will help you to create a [recognisable] personal style."



© Photographer: Vitalij Sidorovic
Model: Cecelia Morgan
Make-Up Artist: Anechka Golubova

Avoid the plastic look: "Frequency separation is great, but use it too much and you are in danger of getting that plastic look. A lot of people that I have met think of this as a quick and easy way to clean up the skin, but at the same time they always go over the top. Stay with the classic Dodge and Burn tools, which takes a while sometimes, but in the end result the model will still look like a model."



© Photographer: Vitalij Sidorovic
Models: Olivija Plekaviciute & Lewis

Selective Color: "The Selective Color tool is usually [the next task] for me after dodging and burning. This tool allows me to control the colours in the pictures, either bringing them up or saturating unwanted colours if they are too

much of a distraction. [The same as] with the frequency separation technique, you need to be careful with it and not overuse it, or your image will look like [it's been treated] with an Instagram filter."

04. EDIT WITH CURVES

The Curves tool in Photoshop is incredibly powerful when used correctly in the hands of a professional, as retoucher Vitalij Sidorovic (www.behance.net/vitalijsidorovic) explains: "Almost every one of my photos goes through Curves adjustments, which is [essentially] dodging and burning. [I used to] underestimate the power of the Curves tool, as I usually used it just for colour improvement. But as I grew and developed, this is the tool that I always use in my retouching now. It is great for cleaning up skin and getting rid of unwanted hairs. Before I start editing I usually look through the photo to see where I want to go with it, then I mark areas that might need more editing time and get myself prepared."

"I start off creating a Black & White adjustment layer on top of my original document and then I add two Curves adjustment layers: one which has boosted exposure and another one that is darkened. Both layers are masked out so that when using a soft brush,



with a very low Flow of 1-7%, I start painting over the areas that need fixing and smoothing out.

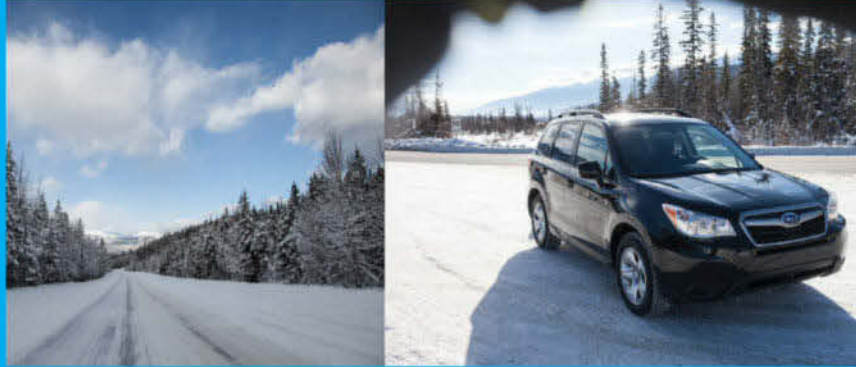
"When I finish with dodging and burning [in this way], sometimes the colours on the skin need fixing, which is when the Saturation tool comes in very handy. This technique allows me to create smooth-looking skin while still maintaining a natural look."



© Creative Director: Adeera Borg
Photographer: Vitalij Sidorovic
Hair Stylist: Vimal Chavda
Co Hair Stylist: Tiffany Stoby
Makeup Artist: Michelle Court
Model: Jordan Bolessa

05. COMBINE IMAGE ELEMENTS

CREATIVE RETOUCHER AND VISUAL COMMUNICATOR AMAR KAKAD (WWW.BEHANCE.NET/AMARKAKAD) SHOWS US HOW TO EDIT DIFFERENT PHOTOS TOGETHER SEAMLESSLY



01 | BASIC COMPOSITE

First, when there are multiple images, you do your cutouts and composite them into your background. Decide what requires scaling and distorting. Next, we use the Lens

Correction filter. This can be found under Filter>Lens Correction. It facilitates in the process of correcting lens distortions and corrects the Horizontal and Vertical perspective.



02 | RETOUCHING AND ADJUSTMENTS

Here we do some basic clean-ups, remove any artefacts or unnecessary reflections from objects, create shape and form. You can use the Patch tool or the Clone

Stamp tool to achieve this. To set the mood, I used the Gradient Map, Black & White, Color Balance, Selective Color and Photo Filter adjustments.



03 | DRAMA AND TEXTURE

In this stage we add further drama and texture to the image. We are going towards a cold look and feel. I added a blue flare painted with a solid

colour on a blending mode, and also incorporated some haze, bokeh effects and with some snow falling to give it more authenticity.



06. CONTROL LIGHT, SHADOWS AND PERSPECTIVE

Great compositing means bringing together multiple images and editing them so that they work together seamlessly in one scene. Lewis Moorhead ([www.flewdesigns.com](http://WWW.flewdesigns.com)) explains how he creates his hyper-realistic composites: "To make multiple images work together and look seamless is not an easy task, but there are some steps to make sure you do this every time. I call it PSL (Perspective, Shadows and Lighting). Each image you use must have the same perspective to work together seamlessly, or you must be able to change the perspective, such as using the Perspective Warp tool or Transform tools. If the perspective is off, your whole image will look faked. The shadows must react with the lighting to be accurate. If the light source is in the left-hand side of the image, then you are going to get shadows on the far right of the object. I use a Round brush with 15% Opacity and 10% Flow. This way I can use a mouse as effectively as using a tablet for creating accurate shadows. For the lights I use a clipping mask on each object, either using a Color Dodge layer with Soft Round brush for harsh lights on a black background, or just a plain Overlay or Soft Light layer using a suitable colour similar to the light source. To bring all the images together to make them look like they belong, I sharpen the image and then use the Noise filter adding around one or two per cent."



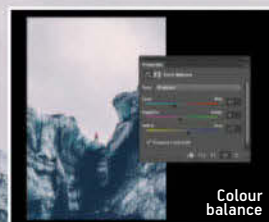
© Derek Johnston Photography

07. PLAN WITH YOUR CLIENT

A good photo-editing project involves good planning to be able to execute your, and your client's idea, perfectly. Photographer Derek Johnston (www.derek-johnston.co.uk) explains: "When a client comes to me with an idea, I'll first work out how realistic it would be to execute. For the image of Elisa, she came to me with the idea that she was creating her glass-like magic between her hands. I'll usually draw up a rough sketch that I will take to the client. The clearer you can be and get your ideas across, then the smoother your work will be. I'll create lighting diagrams for the client too, so they know what's going to be around them, then I'll explain each step of the shoot. As I mainly do composite work it can be a tad strange for them to know why I'm shooting certain things certain ways, especially if they've got no photographic knowledge. Communication is key. I want them to understand every bit of the shoot so it goes smoothly for me and makes a great experience for them."

08. IMPROVE PHOTO COLOURS

TOM ANDERS WATKINS (WWW.TOMANDERS.COM) TALKS US THROUGH THE EDITING ON THIS IMAGE TO IMPROVE COLOURS AND GIVE A VINTAGE FEEL



Noise : I wanted the Iceland image series to have a somewhat personal feel, so adding noise emulating a vintage camera gives all the images a unity, like they were taken from the same camera

Reduce shake: I took this shot wearing crampons standing on a glacier. I wasn't the sturdiest (putting it mildly), resulting in this image being slightly shaken. But using Photoshop's Shake Reduction filter made it barely noticeable

Color Balance : Too much playing with the Color Balance can ruin other parts of the image, such as the red on this guy's coat. With the Selective Color tool it's easy to re-correct any over-altered hues

Raw photo: Raw images capture a surprising amount of data, so pushing the Cyan value in the Color Balance tool really allows these parts of the image to come out and feel all icy

Levels: I like to give my photographs more of a matte feel, so pulling in the white and black Levels nodes slightly will help blend some of the darker details, and take away any stark white bits

09. TRY ADVANCED SHARPENING TECHNIQUES

The final step of any photo-editing project is often to apply a degree of sharpening (it shouldn't be done before other image-editing tasks are completed, as it can introduce a level of noise). If you have multiple layers, then use Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E, which will create a new merged layer at the top of your Layers stack. Photoshop CC's Smart Sharpen filter (Filter>Sharpen>Smart Sharpen) has evolved a great deal over the last releases and what was once hidden away in an advanced mode is now instantly available. You can accurately target the shadows and highlights individually, as well as make global adjustments. First, increase the Amount of sharpening globally, and then increase the Radius so that it is as high as possible



without introducing halos. Reduce Noise helps to sharpen the image, but without too much noise added. Then you can work on the Shadows and Highlights, reducing or increasing the global sharpening in these areas and fading them as needed into the image.

© Tom Anders



© Derek Johnston Photography

10. GET A CLASSIC LOOK WITH TRADITIONAL DODGE AND BURN TECHNIQUES

For a photographer and retoucher, the Dodge and Burn tools are hugely important for creating lights and shadows in an image. They help replicate old darkroom techniques for a traditional feel.

Photographer Derek Johnston (www.derek-johnston.co.uk) says that they are key to his work: "I'd have to say the Dodge and Burn tools [are the most important tools in Photoshop for photo-

editing projects]. For me, they're such an important part of the final outcome of my work and style. It helps shape and mould contours and contrast, and can really add that extra factor. I'll typically have a 50% grey layer set to Soft Light and use the Burn tool set to Midtones around 15% Exposure and work on the dark areas, making sure I have a soft edge on the brush too. I'll switch to the Dodge tool

on the fly by holding down Opt/Alt when I need to work on the highlights. It speeds things up. It's amazing what you can do to your images just by burning and dodging all the dark and light parts. On a portrait I'll get right in on the eyes and lips and get all those details out, dodging and burning all the dark/light parts of the iris and the cracks and lines of the lips."

11. DODGE AND BURN ON AN ADJUSTMENT LAYER

In order to achieve a stylised effect in his retouching, Clinton Lofthouse (www.clintonlofthousephotography.com) utilises the Dodge and Burn tools in Photoshop: "Many photographers dodge and burn in one way, with one technique. I dodge and burn my images three ways with three different techniques, which I think helps me create the stylised worlds I imagine. First off I will dodge and burn with a brush using a Curves adjustment layer, set to a Luminosity blending mode. With this I give form to the body, more of a global dodge and burn. For example, I darken the outside of the arms and lighten the centre.

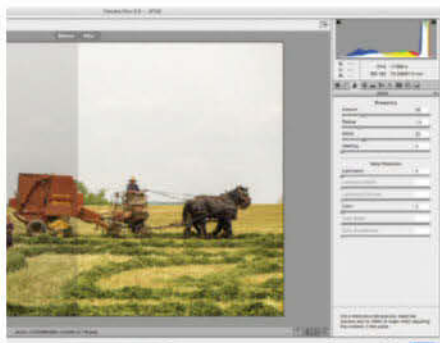
"Next I will dodge and burn on two grey layers, one set to Soft Light and one set to Overlay. With these layers I use the actual Dodge and Burn tools, with them set to Midtones. I concentrate on the details with this, zooming in close and getting the wrinkles, lines and small details. Taking my time to go over everything, as this part is where the stylised feel really comes into play.



© Clinton Lofthouse Photography 2015

"Finally, near the end of an image, I will dodge and burn for a third time using a black or white brush on a new layer on a Soft Light blending mode. Round three is usually to add more

contrast to specific areas I want to stand out more and a global tone of the whole image. Using these three dodge and burn methods together creates the hyper-real look I get in my images."



12. PRE-EDIT IN CAMERA RAW

Photoshop has a lot of great features for photo editing, but Camera Raw 9 offers almost as much power as Lightroom, which is dedicated solely to photo editing and retouching – it pays to make the most of ACR, especially with pure photography. You can open any image in Camera Raw from Bridge or through Photoshop itself (Filter>Camera Raw Filter) to access the tools. You can make basic adjustments to the image, such as Hue/Saturation and colour correction, sharpening, noise reduction,

Curves adjustment and so on. There are also options to add filters, emulating the look of lens filters to give vignette and other similar effects. Bear in mind that your final output affects how much you want to do in ACR. If it is a straightforward retouch, then you can do a lot of your workload in ACR, however, if you are going to be performing a lot of photomanipulation work, avoid anything like sharpening, which might introduce unwanted halos.

13. PERFECT COMMERCIAL RETOUCHING

PSD INNOVATIVE IS A FULL-SERVICE AGENCY OFFERING RETOUCHING, DESIGN, ADVERTISING AND PHOTOGRAPHY. HERE THEY SHARE THE PROCESS BEHIND ONE OF THEIR STUNNING TRANSFORMATIONS



01 | PHOTOGRAPH THE PRODUCT

Richard Parsons, creative photographer, photographed the SLS with multiple exposers to get the lighting correct on each of the panels and changed the position of the lighting to achieve this. Usually we will shoot a back plate without the car, then the car will be moved into frame.



02 | MAKE COMPLEX CUTOUTS

With the car cut out and the background separate, each panel of the car is then cut out with the Pen tool and matched up to the original image on the base layer. We adjust any of the panels for colour matching and make sure that they fit correctly. The panels are then masked and brushed smooth.

03 | CORRECT AND RETOUCH

The final stage is to correct the overall look of the final shot. The headlight beams and a new floor were added. At this point we will use many different adjustment layers and blending modes to achieve a stylised look. Because the entire process is non-destructive, we can adjust until we are happy with the final product.



© PSD Innovative 2015



14. RETOUCH LIKE A PRO

Photographer and retoucher Clinton Lofthouse (clintonlofthousephotography.com) shares some of the secrets of how to retouch any image perfectly: "My most common tasks when it comes to retouching would be the cleaning of any blemishes, not just on the skin of a model, but also on the background. My go-to tool for this is the Healing Brush tool or the Clone tool. The Healing Brush tool just makes the tidying up of messy images so very easy. With the Clone tool you can create whole new sections of your image seamlessly without any distractions, and no one would ever know that you just cloned out a whole car!

"Another common task, on every image for me would be the adding a little colour to the darks – I do this on practically all my images. My favourite method is to use a Selective Color adjustment layer, switch to Blacks and add some blue into the darks. It gives the images a painterly feel, kind of like the great painters who created their blacks from various dark paints mixed together.

"The Pen tool is another common tool in my retouching workflow. I create a lot of composites, and nothing gives you a better cutout than the Pen tool; the Quick Selection tool and similar tools are okay, but nowhere near as accurate.

My last commonly used tool would be a Linear Dodge blending mode. I paint on this layer with a bright colour to manipulate the light of an image. I love creating stylised images and adding lighting effects adds greatly to this effect."

15. USE BRUSHES FOR MORE THAN PAINTING

For each project, Photoshop offers tools that are right for the job at hand. Andy McIntosh, director at PSD Innovative (www.psdinnovative.com) says that the final image that he is creating and for what purpose determines the tools that he selects. However, for him, the humble Brush tool is one that proves immensely useful across a range of projects: "My go-to tool would have to be the Brush tool, as it is so diverse. I always use a Wacom 24HD and find that the Brush tool offers me huge flexibility for fast accurate work. As there are almost infinite ways to set up brushes, I can be sure that I can get the look, feel and texture that I need for any given project. I have many favourite brushes and many custom brushes that I use on nearly every project. Because I started as a traditional airbrush artist, it feels very natural to me to be using brushes and a Wacom."





16. MAKE AND USE ACTIONS FOR REPETITIVE PROCESSES

Tom Anders Watkins (tomanders.com) has created a range of photo-editing Actions for Photoshop, which are sold in bundles in his Creative Market store (www.creativemarket.com/tomanders). His Actions have been one of the top-selling products for two years running, so he's well placed to explain why you should use Actions: "Actions are brilliant; they're like the professional version of Instagram filters for your photography. Whenever I'm editing photos, I will spend time creating a specific look for one of the images, recording the process so it becomes a Photoshop

Action, which I can replicate super quickly for all my images without having to re-create them one by one.

"If you find yourself repeating the same process multiple times inside Photoshop... Look at creating an Action; whether it's as simple as cropping multiple images and saving them, to complex effects or photographic looks, they will save time. Alternatively, if you struggle getting the look you want, like a genuine HDR look or vintage feel, search for an Action that replicates it. You can see another one of my photos edited here with my Iceland Action.

18. USE GRADIENT MAPS

"There are quite a number of tools in Photoshop that are important," says Amar Kakad (www.behance.net/amarkakad). "But, of late, I have been using the Gradient Map tool (Image>Adjustments>Gradient Map) a lot in my line of work. It is quite a powerful tool and used in the process of applying contrast to colours. Essentially the Gradient Map tool converts the image into Grayscale. I then change the blending mode to Soft Light, which restores the colour values. It effectively applies contrast in the black, grey and white tones. You are offered various presets – give it a try and you will see some interesting results. You can use this either with two colours or even multiple colours. It is entirely up to you. Play with sliders, this will allow you more control over how much contrast you want to apply."



17. APPLY PHOTO SKILLS TO 3D

Many photo-editing skills can be applied to 3D images, and 3D retouching skills translate to 2D as well, as 3D artist Lorett Foth (www.lorettfoth.com) explains: "The importance of lighting does not just apply to 3D, but also to a 3D photomontage or any other non-3D retouching job. Either the lighting in the background of the image will need to be adjusted to your element, or the lighting of the object will need to be matched to your background. This can be achieved by paying close attention to the type of light sources that illuminate the image, and in which direction the light follows. Another thing to consider and match is the light colour. An image will not look quite right if an object is illuminated by warm light and the rest of the image has cold light. I think it's good practice to look at how photographers set up lighting, to get a better understanding and to be able to guess how an image is lit without seeing the light sources."

19. CUSTOMISE PHOTOSHOP FOR THE TASK

Fashion photographer and retoucher Sabine Metz (www.sabinemetz.com) has found that learning how to customise your Photoshop workspace and tools makes it much easier to be fast and efficient in projects: "I've been really keen on improving my workflow efficiency. Not only by making the retouching process from import to export as streamlined as possible, but also by making my workspaces more suitable for what I want to achieve. A lot of people do use shortcuts, like B for Brush tool and J for Healing Brush tool. Because I always use a Wacom when

retouching, I have my right hand on my Wacom, and my left hand on my keyboard. All the shortcuts I use are by default scattered all over my keyboard, which makes having a Wacom to prevent strain on my right arm redundant if my left hand is still reaching everywhere. By using Edit>Keyboard Shortcuts I set my shortcuts so that I have everything I use daily on the left-hand side of my keyboard. Also, I've set the interface colour back to good old CS5 grey. I find that having the darker colour scheme around my image clouds my judgment on contrast too much."



© Photography and retouching by Sabine Metz



20. MAKE SURE YOUR WORKFLOW IS NON-DESTRUCTIVE

A good workflow is key for photo editing, especially in a professional studio environment, as Andy McIntosh from PSD Innovative (www.psdinnovative.com) explains: "A fully non-destructive workflow is essential for what we do. Everything we do is done in layers, which of course means very large files and huge amounts of RAM and storage space. A client may come back for a project that we have done six months or so ago, and ask for something to be changed or

added or just an element of that design to be used in a new project. Without a non-destructive workflow that could be problematic and time consuming. Colour accuracy workflows are vital too; we calibrate everything from our cameras (input devices) to our Wacoms and Eizo monitors, and use the same workflows for colour accuracy through all our software. We use Prepress ISOs to ensure that we don't get any nasty surprises from printers!"

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WWW.IMAGINESHOP.CO.UK



IMPROVE YOUR MASKING SKILLS

EXPLORE A VARIETY OF MASKING TECHNIQUES IN PHOTOSHOP TO CREATE A MAGE'S MASK

Mythical imagery is a pop culture trope enjoyed by millions of people. From video games to TV series, it has influenced a lot of art forms in today's world. Inspiration drawn from the mythical age will be crucial in creating a mask for a mage.

Within Photoshop there are different types of masking that can be used along with various selection tools to help the process. Photoshop CS6 is recommended for this tutorial since the Oil Paint filter will be used for post-processing. Different

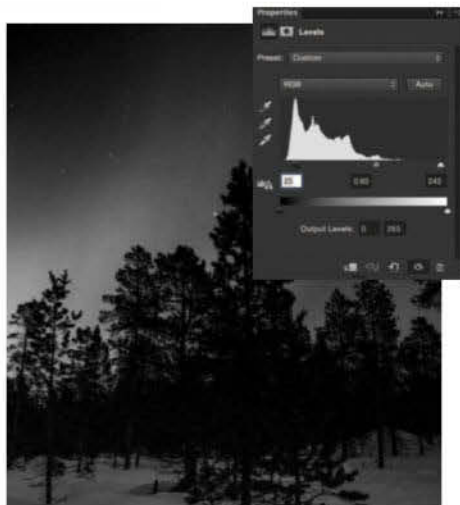
types of adjustment layers will also help to blend different stock photos together.

When using masking techniques such as layer masks and clipping masks, edits are non-destructive and easily editable. With the nested layers ability in Photoshop CC, masking can target specific layers and groups.

A tablet is recommended since it will increase the speed of cutting out stock photos, editing layer masks, creating selections and painting the the model's hair.

SET THE SCENE

EDIT THE MODEL AND BACKGROUND TO GET STARTED



01 SET UP THE BACKGROUND

First download the free image ZSMgNjYrHRM from unsplash.com to set as the background. Create a new document with dimensions of 240mm by 310mm. Import the image. Right-click the layer and select Rasterize Layer. De-saturate using Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+U. Create a Levels adjustment layer. Set values to 25, 0.85, 245. Group the layers and name it 'BG'.

03 PAINT THE MAGE'S EYES

Under the magenta tab, set the percentages to 0, -80, +88, -24. Create a new layer and set the blend mode to Overlay and clip mask again. Grab a soft white brush and paint inside model's pupils. Create a new layer with blend mode to Soft Light and Opacity at 35%. Paint outside the eyes.

02 FROM MODEL TO MAGE

Import the model photo. Select the model from the background using the desired Selection tool and create a layer mask. After that create a new Selective Color adjustment layer. Clipping mask it to the model layer by holding the Alt/Opt key and clicking between layers in the panel. Clipping mask only targets the clipped layer and nowhere else.



OUR EXPERT

MOE PIKE SOE
<http://pike.moe>
 @moepike

Moe Pike Soe is a 22-year-old self taught digital artist and designer from Yangon, Myanmar. He is currently working as a freelance graphic designer while extending his knowledge at Parsons the New School of Design in New York.

SOURCE FILES

On FileSilo you will find all the stock photos needed to follow the tutorial, including the retouched model photo provided by Moe Pike Soe's photographer friend, Jason Nine.

WORK IN PROGRESS

MASKING THE MAGE



Progress 1: Editing the model and background



Progress 2: Cutting out parts for the mask



Progress 3: Final touches



04 FINALISE THE MAGE

Create a new layer, set the blend mode to Soft Light and Opacity to 15%. Paint on the cloak to darken it. Next, create a Black & White adjustment layer. Set the values to 25, 52, 40, 60, 20, 80. After that, select the layer mask of the adjustment layer, grab a black brush and paint the eyes and parts of the skin. This means the black and white will only affect the white areas of the layer mask. Then create an Exposure adjustment layer. Set the values to +0.34, 0, 0.89.



05 CREATE THE BASE OF THE MASK

Open mask.jpg. Cut out the mask from the background by using a layer mask. Right-click on the layer then select Rasterize Layer. Now right-click the layer mask and select Apply Layer Mask. Next create another layer mask and cut out the beak part of the mask. Create new layer, and clipping mask it to the mask. Set the blend mode to Soft Light and paint on the left and right edges of the mask to create the shadow of the cloak.



06 ADJUST THE MASK

Create a new Exposure adjustment layer and set the value to 0, 0, 1.29. Clipping mask it to the mask layer. Next add the shadow of the mask dropping onto the mage's face. To do that, create a new layer and move it below the Black & White adjustment layer to clipping mask. Set the blend mode to Overlay. With a soft black brush, paint underneath the edges of the mask.



07 ADD ORNAMENTS

Import the file crown.jpg. Right-click> Rasterize Layer. Desaturate layer using Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+U. Cut out the crown using a layer mask. Since we will be using the same stock image to create the ornaments, it's best to duplicate the original masked layer. Use Transform tools such as Warp and Perspective to line up parts of the crown to the mask. If parts from the crown need to be deleted, just edit it using the layer mask. Repeat the process until both sides of the mask are completed.

■ QUICK TIP

When editing the layer mask on a layer, don't just use black and white color brushes. Grey tone brushes are good for erasing and

blending adjustment layer effects. Play around with different brushes and shades to extract specific parts of a layer.



08 IMPROVE THE ORNAMENTS

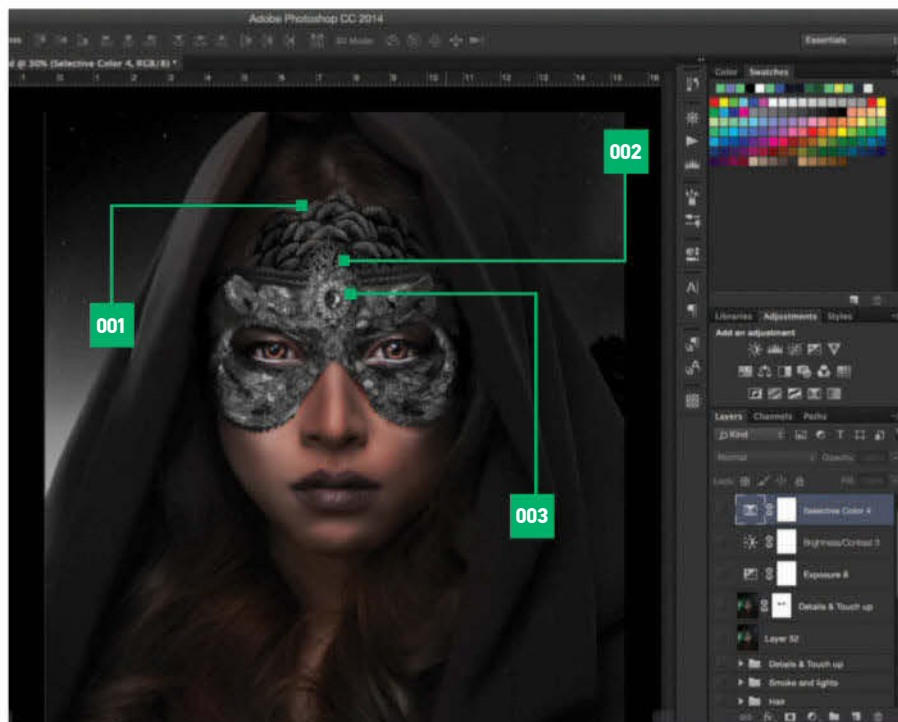
Repeat Step 7 to add centre pieces to the mask. The trick is to align the parts of the mask with the lines from it. After setting up the ornaments on the mask, make it more realistic by adding shadows and some highlights. Similar to creating the cloak shadow in Step 5, create a new layer, change blend mode to either Overlay or Soft Light and paint with a soft black brush on the right and left edges of the ornaments.

WORK ON THE MASK

ADD DETAILS AND REFINE THE MAGE'S MASK

09 UPGRADE THE MASK

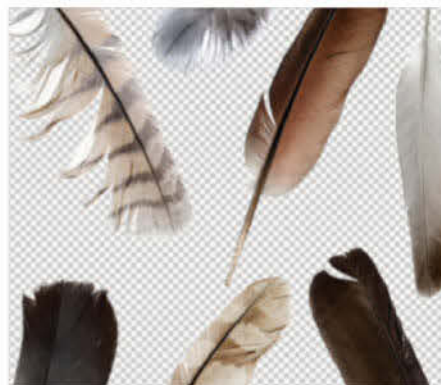
Creating the mask requires multiple steps of duplicating the original layer, desaturating the layer, transforming it to match the base mask, and finally adding realistic shadows and highlights. Keep repeating the steps until the surface of the base mask is covered with ornaments. Remember to desaturate all the layers because the colours will be painted later on.



001 | FOREHEAD PIECE
Import the file peacock.jpg and cut out the feathers. Then like before, add shadows to the sides and bottom

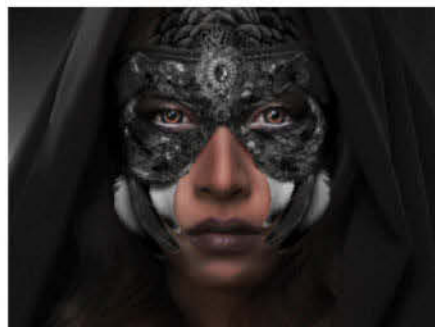
002 | ADD A CHARM
Import chain.jpg. Cut out one charm from the chain. Place it in middle below base mask layer, but above peacock feathers

003 | JEWELS
Import jewel.jpg. Cut out and place it in the middle and above all the ornaments



11 PREPARE THE FEATHERS

Open the file feathers.jpg in a new document in Photoshop. The easiest way to cut out the feathers is to use Magic Wand to select all the white space. Right-click while the selection is still active and then choose Inverse Selection. Next use the Refine Edge tool and create a layer mask. After that apply the layer mask to the layer. Now select each feather with the Lasso tool (L) and move it across the two documents.



12 IMPORT THE FEATHERS

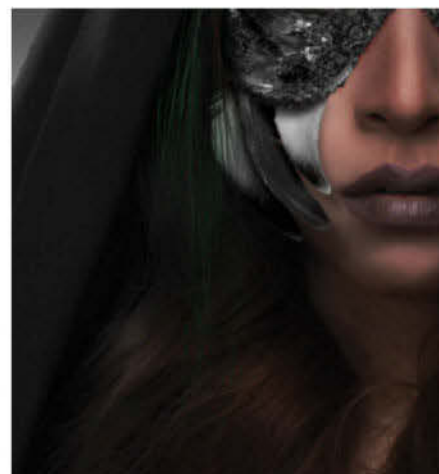
Import three different feathers into the artwork. Place the layers below the base mask group. Use the same techniques as adding ornaments to create shadows on each feather and on the mage's face. Use the Liquify tool (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+X) to edit the shapes of the feather. Use other Transform tools such as Warp to edit the feathers. After positioning the three feathers, group the layers. Duplicate the group, go to the Transform tool, then Cmd/Ctrl+T>Right-click>Flip Horizontal and align it on the right side.



10 POLISH THE ORNAMENTS

Create a new layer, change the blend mode to Soft Light at 55% Opacity. Clipping mask it to the ornaments group and paint with a soft black brush to darken parts of the ornament. This step is the final chance to touch up the ornaments on the mask. Check if there are any parts sticking out of the base mask and the ornaments. If everything is satisfactory, create a new Exposure adjustment layer and set the values to +0.34, 0, 0.81.

“When selecting colours for hair, select up to three different tones; dark, mid and highlights”



13 PAINT THE HAIR

Create a new layer above the ornaments. Grab a 4px hard brush. Select the colour using the Eyedropper tool (hold Alt/Opt) and click on the original parts of the hair. Paint outside the mage's face and make sure to cover up some parts of the mask. When selecting colours for hair, select up to three different tones. Use dark tones to paint the base parts of the hair, midtones to create volume and finally the highlights to react to the light source.

FINISH WITH MORE DETAILS

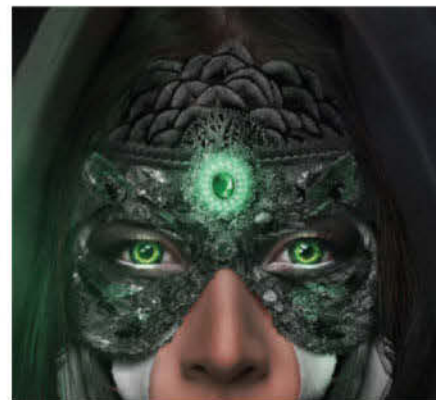
ADD COLOUR AND ATMOSPHERE TO PERFECT THE MAGE



14 FILL IN THE COLOURS Create a new layer set the blend mode to Overlay. Select a soft brush with the colour #54ce81. Now paint over parts of the masks, the cloak and the eyes to add colours to the scene. Use a hard brush to colour the parts of the ornaments on the mask but use a soft brush on the middle jewel to create the glow. To make it easier to paint specific parts, bring back selections from previous layer masks. Hold Cmd/Ctrl while clicking on the layer mask.



15 SET UP THE ATMOSPHERE Create a new layer. Select a big soft brush with the colour #54ce81. Paint on the left edge of the artwork. Change the blend mode to Screen. Create another layer and paint a small glow. Change the blend mode to Linear Dodge. Create another layer, use a smoke/cloud brush and paint on the left of the mage. Repeat the step for the right side, but with the colour #767bb8. Group the layers and place this above all the layers.



16 ADD MORE DETAILS Create a new layer. Create a circle using the Elliptical Marquee tool (M), and then right-click>Stroke with values of 2px with white. Go into Layer Style>Outer glow and then set blend mode to Color Dodge with the colour of #9cff5a and Opacity at 35%. Duplicate the layer and place this inside the eye. Create a new layer and paint the glow of the jewellery using a Screen blend mode and a soft brush with the colour of #55cf82.



17 FINAL TOUCHES Create the Moon by filling a white circle using the Elliptical Marquee tool. Duplicate the circle and invert it (Cmd/Ctrl+I). Overlap the black circle over the white and merge them. Cut out the white part, and add a white Outer Glow to the Layer Style. Create a new layer and merge all visible layers with Shift+Alt+Cmd/Ctrl+E. Grab the Dodge tool (O) and paint on highlights to bring in more contrast. After contrast, select the Burn tool (O) and paint shadow areas.

TIE COLOURS TOGETHER

To make objects more blended in the scene, Photoshop CS6 has a feature called Oil Paint. To do that, open the file in CS6 and create a new layer and merge all visible layers. Then select Filter>Oil Paint and play around with the values but keep the shine at 0. Then select Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask at 120%. Adding noise can also help blend colours. Create a new layer, fill it with black and select Filter>Noise>Add noise. Then set the blend mode to Soft Edge and adjust opacity as needed.

QUICK TIP

Adjustment layers are a great way to easily manipulate tones and colours on a layer. Try out different adjustment layers as some are more convenient in tasks like changing hue or editing a specific colour channel. All the adjustment layers can be controlled by a layer mask, which makes it easier to edit the effect area.



18 MAKE FURTHER ADJUSTMENTS

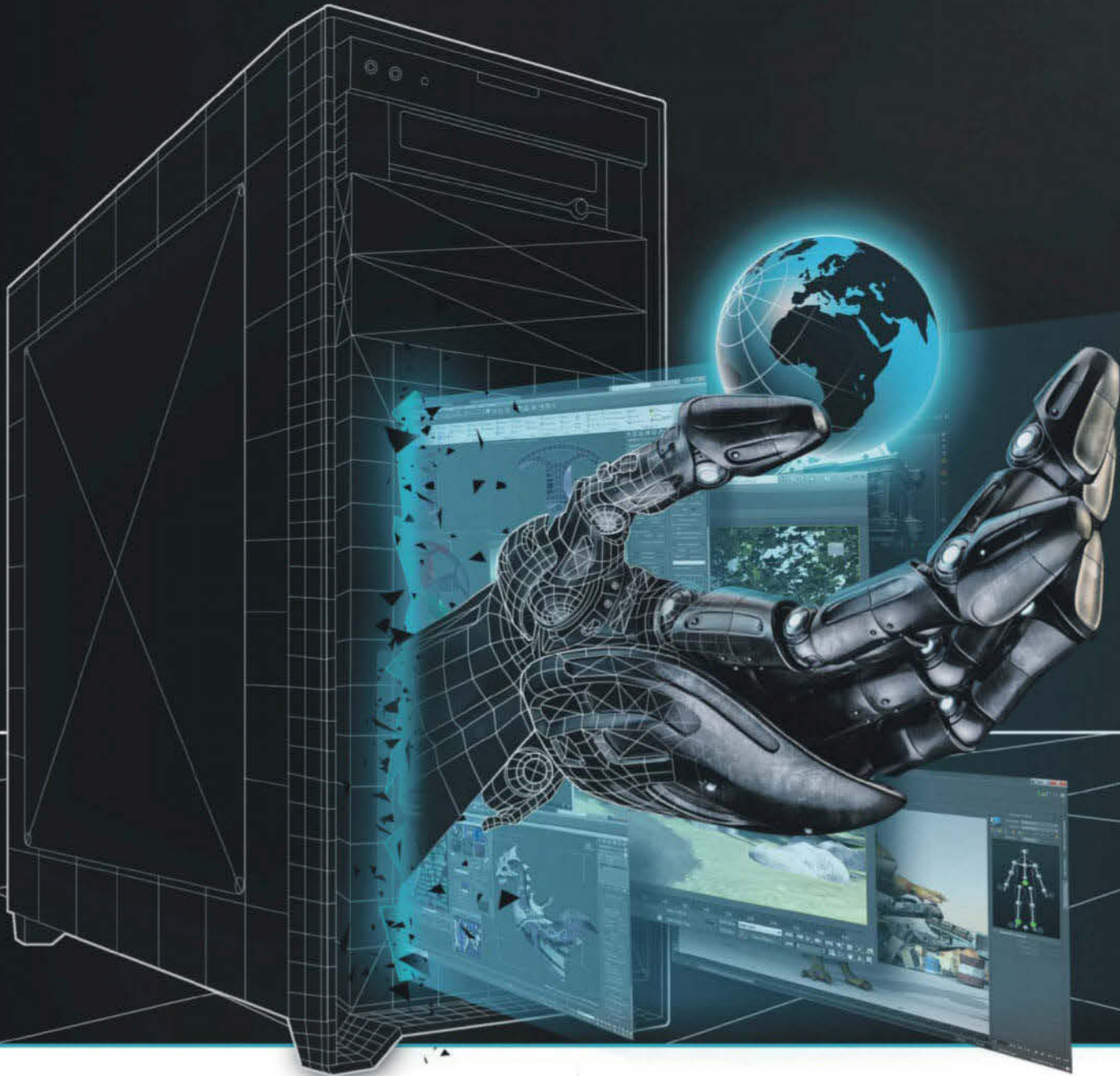
Create a layer mask and paint with a black brush on skin and eye area. Create a new Exposure adjustment layer with values at +0.28, -0.0010, 0.84. Create a Brightness/contrast adjustment layer with values of 37, 0. Then create a Selective Color adjustment layer. Under Red tab, set the values to 0, 0, +22%, -52%. Under Yellow tab, set the yellow to +41% and black to +81%. Under Blue tab, set the yellow to -54%. Under White tab, change the black to -24%. Under Neutral tab, change the yellow to +2%. Under Black tab change the black to +2%.



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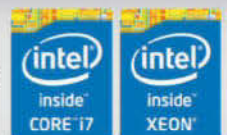
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“I created the composite from the bottom upwards... I put in the corals, the fishes, the divers – and every new element needed adjustments”



ISOMETRIC TSUNAMI

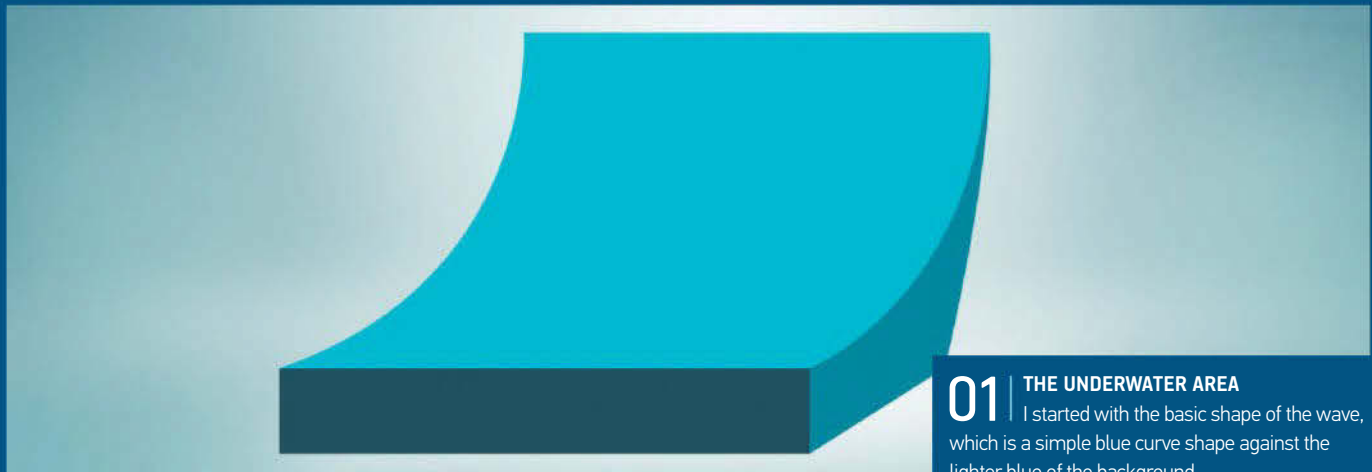
JACK USEPHOT

THIS BEAUTIFUL COMPOSITE MADE WAVES ON THE WEB. WE CAUGHT UP WITH ARTIST JACK USEPHOT TO FIND OUT HOW IT WAS CREATED

Brazilian graphic designer Jack Usephot (www.jackusephot.46graus.com) had never done any artwork with a water theme before he challenged himself to create this image. “I created the composite from the bottom upwards,” he explains. “I put in the corals, the fishes, the divers – and every new element needed adjustments; colour and lighting

corrections. After that I worked on the sea. I put in some waves and the tsunami, I applied colour and lighting, at the top of the wave I used some brushes to make it more realistic, and finally, I put the elements on the ground. They’re very important to the composition, they give more depth, and show the three-dimensional effect powerfully!” Working as a graphic designer and retoucher, Jack Usephot

shows impressive dedication to what is both his job and his hobby. The Brazilian creative is now looking for a new challenge: “I’m looking for an opportunity to work outside my country, a new language, a different culture and new challenges of course. Today this is my goal, work a lot, do not stop learning, practice, create new great works and inspire others!”



01 | THE UNDERWATER AREA
I started with the basic shape of the wave, which is a simple blue curve shape against the lighter blue of the background.



02 | THE TSUNAMI
This is the most important element of the composition. To create it, I used a wave photo and a particle brush to create the water particles, and a smoke brush to simulate a kind of white smoke formed by [the] water force.

03 | COMPOSITE ELEMENTS
In the sky I used some free cloud brushes. I left the background as white as possible to give the sky this sense of clarity, and after that I put in the birds. To create the underwater area I used some elements of the sea: ships, divers, the turtle. In every one I needed to adjust the colours and lighting using adjustment layers and brushes until everything had the same appearance!





DESIGN A CARTOON CREATURE

LEARN THE STEPS, TRICKS AND TIPS FOR CREATING A CARTOON-LIKE CHARACTER ILLUSTRATION

The drawing and creation of mythological creatures will provide you with endless ideas and creative possibilities. Every civilisation has myths and old tales about such creatures, from warlocks and dragons to the Loch Ness monster, and studying their origin often leaves you with a deeper appreciation for the culture in question. The Hydra in our illustration though, is definitely not an accurate historical depiction, but rather a cartoon incarnation of the Greek myth.

Cartoons can be silly and vibrant, and Photoshop's toolset is immeasurably useful for the job of an illustrator. Photoshop will help you to bring out the

best colours in an image and is particularly useful in the creation of the utterly fantastical. Its clean, well-organised, and easy to understand interface is ideal for both large and small scale projects.

In this tutorial, we'll go through the steps needed to bring a monstrosity to life. Going through the process of an illustration from a chicken-scratch compositional sketch to end-result, we will cover areas such as masking layers, Photoshop filters, tools, and plenty of painting tips.

Before we start, Google mythological creatures to inspire yourself and come back when you have thought of something fun to design. And don't forget to compile a page of photo references for yourself!

THE HYDRA'S BASE

LET'S LAY DOWN THE WOODWORK FOR THE PAINTING

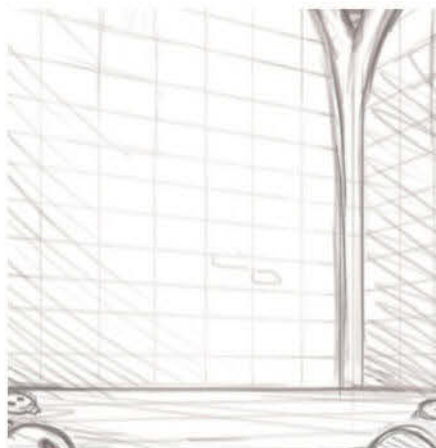
01 CREATE A ROUGH SKETCH

To start off, let's boot up Photoshop and create a new canvas. Go to Layer>New Layer to start a first rough draft. Keep in mind that this stage isn't about the details, it's about getting a sense of the composition and personality of our characters across. It's important to commit to the idea at this stage!



03 START TO REFINE THE LINES

Now we have the rough draft sorted, we can tackle getting crisper, more final lines. Once again, go to Layer>Opacity and lower the opacity on both the dungeon and Hydra draft layers. Now create a brand-new layer for our good lines and take a hard round brush. Carefully trace over your original draft, making clean lines. Add more detail!



02 FIND A PERSPECTIVE

Now before we jump into refining our Hydra's sketch, let's get a sense of our dungeon's perspective. On the draft, go to Layer>Opacity and turn it down a notch so that we can see what we're doing. This stage is important because we do not want our dragon floating about at a wonky angle.



OUR EXPERT

PIPER THIBODEAU
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Piper Thibodeau is a 22-year-old character designer from Canada. She currently works as a freelancer for companies such as DreamWorks TV, Nickelodeon, and Penguin Books/Random House.

WORK IN PROGRESS

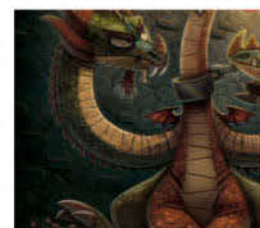
FROM SKETCH TO FINAL PIECE



Progress 1: Start rough



Progress 2: Refine shadows



Progress 3: Colouring the beast



04 COLOUR THE DUNGEON

Let's add in some colour. Though it may be tempting to colour the Hydra first, we should figure out the overall colour of the dungeon because it will decide the palette and tone in this painting. Go to Layer>New Layer and drag your new layer under the good lines. Now we can finally begin colouring. Let's be sure that the objects here, like the skull and swords, are influenced by the blue hue of the dungeon, but stay within the range of the palette.



05 CHOOSE HYDRA COLOURS

With our dungeon's tone sorted out, let's tackle the Hydra. The Hydra is a big focal point in the image, we're going to use a trick to ensure that its tones are easier to edit. First, select a hard round brush and begin filling out all the areas within the lines of the dragon – pay careful attention to stay within the lines! Now, click the checkerboard icon in the layer box to lock the colours in.



06 CREATE A MASK

There are multiple ways to go about shading a character, but using masks in Photoshop will enable us much more flexibility than manually shading the character. This step will save us time and if we change our mind on the shading, we can always return to the layer to fix it later. First off, duplicate the Hydra's locked in layer from Step 5, right-click on the layer and select Duplicate Layer. Now unlock the layer and select the mask button on the bottom of the layer interface.

■ QUICK TIP

It's very helpful to create a reference sheet at the beginning of your illustration. For inspiration purposes only, not to copy! It means that you don't have to make frequent trips to Google Images during your creation process. This helps even more if you have two monitors to organise the material.



07 ERASE THE MASK

Now, select our mask. When using this technique we will use the brush tool and alternate between absolute black and absolute white. Using black will erase our dragon's shading as though it's being erased with the Erase tool, but white will re-create the shadows at any given point. Back to our illustration: we need to consider that the lantern is going to drop light onto our dragons from behind, so we should erase the shading according to that light source.



08 HARMONISE THE COLOURS

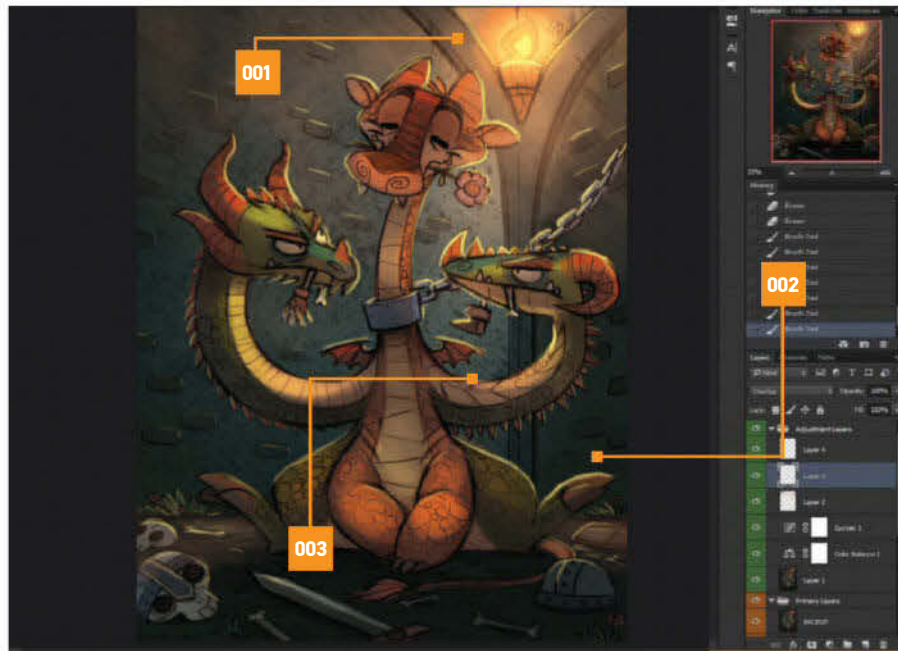
With the pillars of our illustration formed, we're going to use a quick shortcut to better bring together the different values here. Select the Curves tool by clicking the circle icon on the bottom of the layer interface, this will prompt us with a graph and two points. Let's try to play around with them until we find a good harmony with the colours. Alternatively, we could select Photo Filter, but keep it to a low opacity, as it can muddy up the colours easily.

■ ADD SOME HIGHLIGHTS AND DETAILS

FIGURE OUT HOW LIGHTS AND SHADOWS WILL WORK IN OUR PAINTING

09 | ADD HIGHLIGHTS

The major colours are solved: now we can get to the juicy rendering parts. Taking a soft Airbrush tool, we're going to imply where the lantern light is highlighting the dragon and debris below him. Be sure to light up the spaces behind him so that he pops out more and the ground isn't just a big dark blob!



001 | LIGHT SOURCE 2.0
We create a new light source to shine some warm values onto the Hydra that will allow it to pop out more

002 | LIGHT VALUES
Flesh out the areas where the Hydra will have lighter values on its body, heads, horns and tail

003 | CONTRASTING COLOURS
We deliberately select contrasting colours (oranges, greens and turquoises) to counter the overall blueish-grey tones



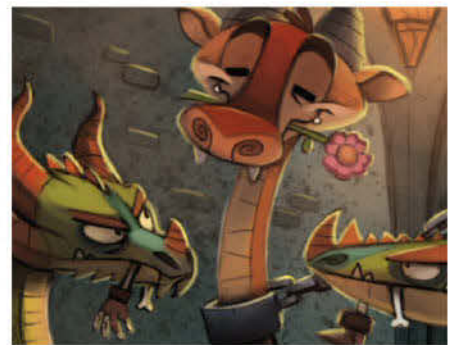
11 | ADD SOME SCALES

For some supplementary, but important details, we're moving onto the Hydra's scales. While there are multiple ways of going about dragon scales, we're going to go for more of a cartoon-like approach here. Selecting a Soft Airbrush on a new layer, we're going to imply circles of all shapes and sizes around the dragon's body. It's fine to cluster them here and there, but try to make sure that some connect so it gives the illusion of there being many while only drawing few. We'll also darken a few of them.



12 | PAINT THE BACKGROUND

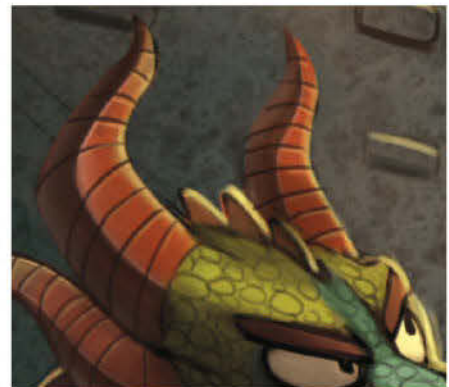
For the dungeon floor, walls, and materials we're going to paint according to our lantern's light source again. There isn't much sense in creating a mask for all these elements, as we did with the Hydra, because they're not very large or prominent. Instead just use a Soft Airbrush to reflect the dungeon's tones and hues onto the subjects and the wall's bricks. Be sure to treat metallic surfaces differently than skulls and vice versa, they each will reflect light in a different way.



10 | REFINE THE DETAILS

We want to solidify the forms to make sure we don't get anything unintentionally funky going on. Treat painting this as you would a simple sphere, even if the Hydra is more complex than that. Make sure that we're painting on the good lines, and don't hide that layer! They're our guidelines and we're going to paint by them accurately. We don't want to leave any traces of outline lying about, it takes away from the rendering and makes it look unfinished.

“We don't want to leave any traces of outline lying about, it takes away from the rendering and makes it look unfinished”

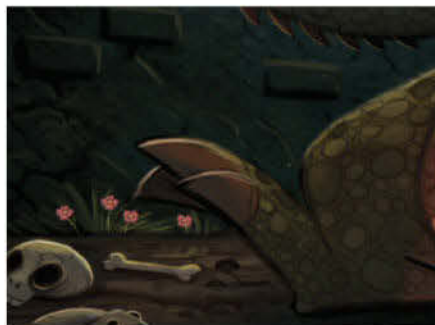


13 | HIGHLIGHT THE HORNS

Horns are a focal point of any dragon, so we must pay careful attention to them. As humans, we're naturally programmed to seek out the pointy dangerous bits in the world around us so that we may protect ourselves, and likewise, our eyes will be drawn to the horns of this creature before anything else. Using a very small light brush, we're going to imply the highlights from the lantern and how they enter the creases on the dragon's horns. To give it more depth, we're also going to take a large, softer Airbrush tool and Eyedropper to select a colour from the dungeon's interior to reflect onto the bottom of the horns.

IT'S ALIVE!

WITH OUR BASES DOWN, LET'S RENDER THIS OUT TO COMPLETION



14 ADD THE SMALLER DETAILS

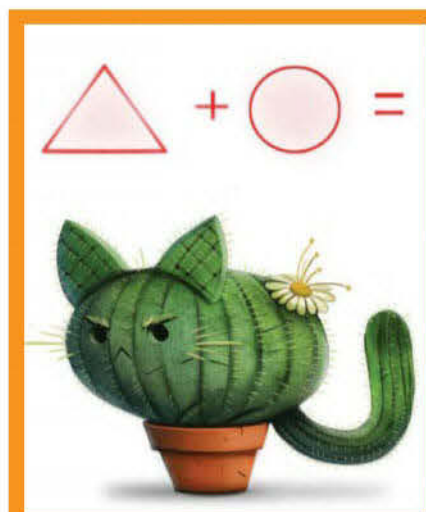
This dungeon is very old and worn out. We want to bring out the wear factor in the walls by creating thunder-like streaks of cracks along the surfaces – be careful not to distract from the dragon! Lightly imply, don't overpower. We'll be able to fill in these creases later with some light to help them pop more. Using a finer brush, we will make work of the small nicks and scratches on the swords, chains and skulls – remember that this isn't a glamorous environment, make it reflect that – add some dirt and grime while you're at it.

15 ADD MOSS AND FLOWERS

It would be pretty odd if the middle dragon got that flower out of nowhere, wouldn't it? We're going to amplify the worn-out atmosphere of this dungeon and make a big mossy mess. For creating moss on the walls, use a very light medium sized Airbrush to imply the green here and there, don't make it too prominent. We will be using a smaller and finer brush to paint some grass strokes and the pink flowers. Let's ensure that the pink pops so the viewer will connect the flower in the Hydra's mouth to that on the dungeon floor.

16 ADD BLUE HIGHLIGHTS

And here's a fun part to tackle – the overall tone's light sources. Like we did a bit with the horns before, we're going to select a blue similar to that used in the dungeon (preferably lighter and more contrasted) and apply it as a highlight coming from the dungeon floor and working its way up the character and surroundings – creating a stark contrast against the light of the lantern coming from the top. Very lightly, with a low-opacity brush, apply the blue hues onto the dragon's scales and highlight the edge of its limbs with a sheen.

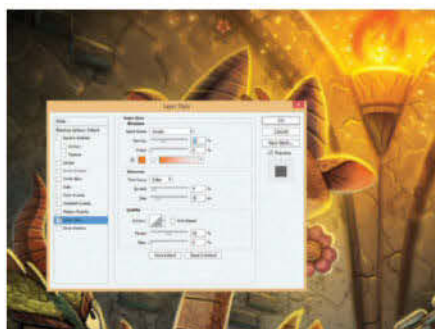


■ SHAPE LANGUAGE

Though it's a rather extensive topic of its own, it's good practice to convey a character's personality from the shapes assigned to it. Square-like characters are sturdy and reliable, circular characters are round and cute. Triangles, with their pointy ends that we don't want to prick our finger on, are often depicted as villainous characters. The list of reasons for each shape is pretty varied and there are plenty of blends and exceptions to the rule, but we should try to be conscious of the forms we're using and how they describe our character without the crutch of words. Let the drawing speak for itself.

■ QUICK TIP

The Navigator tool can be pretty restricting sometimes because it's so small. To get around that, go to Window>Arrange>New Window for your file – now we have a second window for your drawing that you can make any size. And any edits we make will automatically update on the duplicate.



17 CREATE EMBERS

For some cool flashy fire effects, let's be sure to create a new layer and go to Layer>Layer Style>Outer Glow. Now, create a bunch of sparks coming off of the fire and dancing around the scenery. We should make a variation of sparks, varying their size and opacity. We can also toy around with this by increasing the spread and size under Elements and making the outer layer's colour more orange than the default white.



18 ADD THE FINISHING TOUCHES

And now we can really toy around with the Curves and photo filters. To aid us in these final touches, let's create a new layer: select the painting then Copy and Paste. Now we have a dummy layer for edits. If we feel like there's a minor colour that we dislike, we can try to alter it a bit using the Overlay tool, select the layer and change it from Normal to Overlay or Soft Light. We can also use the Dodge tool to bring out highlights in the painting.



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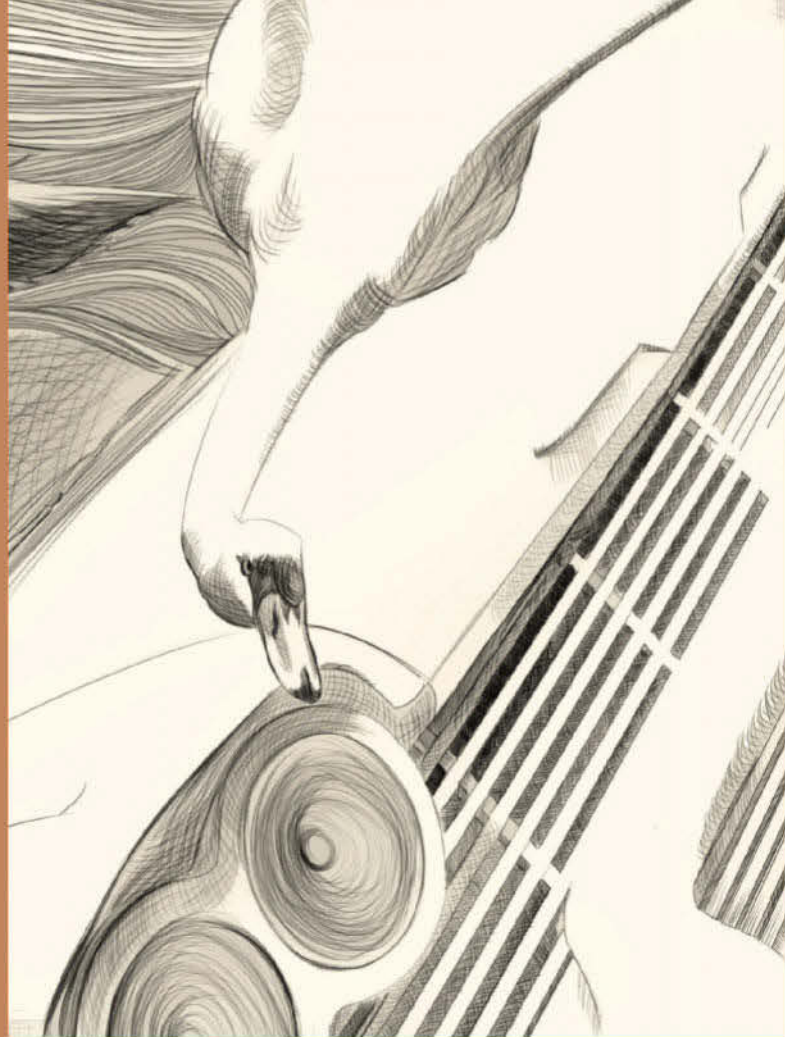
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“ I wanted to remember the spirit of that era left behind, when people had a bit more innocence and I think they were happier ”



© Alfonso Elola



VINTAGE SPIRIT

ALFONSO ELOLA

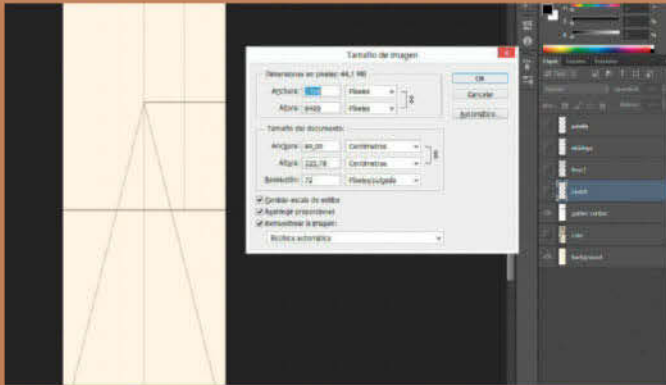
DISCOVER THE COMPOSITIONAL TRICKS THIS SPANISH ARTIST USED TO CREATE HIS BEAUTIFUL IMAGE

Alfonso Elola (www.behance.net/elola), a 22-year-old Madrid-based illustrator, explains, "With this illustration I wanted to remember the spirit of that era left behind, when people had a bit more innocence and I think they were happier... The 1950s were a time where the

people felt freer because the war had ended and the world began to grow."

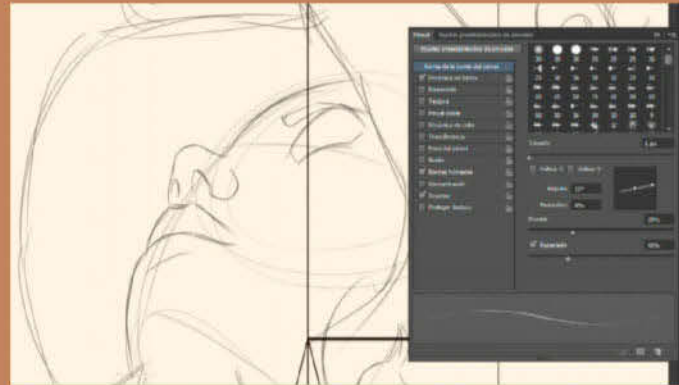
He chose the iconography of the image carefully to fit with his idealised vision of the era that inspires him: "Birds as a symbol of freedom, the car [representing an] object of those times and the woman's face with a happy expression"

all combine to create an image that nods towards the aspirational Americana of the Fifties. Elola kept the colour palette simple, "I didn't want a colourful piece, I wanted a greyscale look and a simple technique", but he stresses the importance of using established rules of composition in the piece.



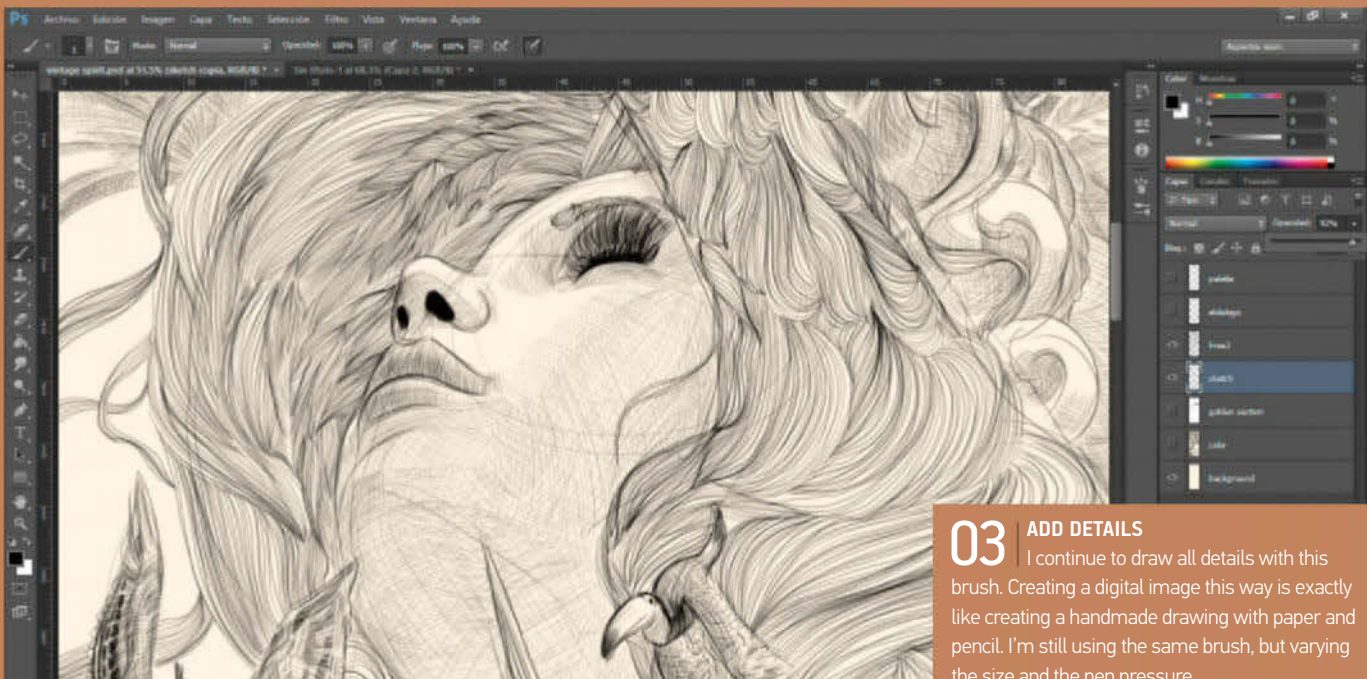
01 THE COMPOSITION

First I created a composition marked out using the rules of the golden ratio, which I used to create the illusion of depth without necessarily having to use perspective with vanishing points.



02 DRAWING THE DESIGN

Now I make a simple sketch using an Airbrush, but configured for pen pressure on my tablet and angled diagonally so that the line tapers off at the end of a stroke. All of the drawing is [done] with this single brush.



03 ADD DETAILS

I continue to draw all details with this brush. Creating a digital image this way is exactly like creating a handmade drawing with paper and pencil. I'm still using the same brush, but varying the size and the pen pressure.



04 MONOCHROMATIC PALETTE

I create a palette swatch to use in the illustration. This palette is like a greyscale, but with a warmer cream tone.



06 VARY THE TONES

I add some variant tones in little parts for more details and volume. Each space in the drawing is selected and coloured separately. The tool used for this isn't important – brushes or the Paint Bucket – but using a variant tone in different parts of the drawing adds detail. It's very simple; you only need time and patience.



08 AVOID OVERLOAD

To avoid overloading the composition I put some empty spaces like the swan without feathers and the car hood into the composition as less detailed places for the viewer's eye to rest.



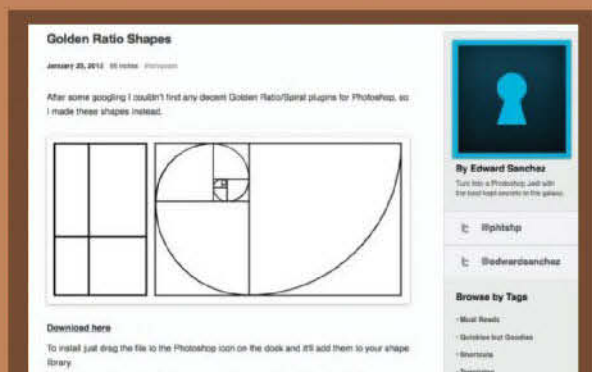
05 COLOUR WITH SELECTIONS

For colouring the piece I used the Magic Wand selection tool. I selected each part on the grid of the linear drawing and painted the colour into the selection on a separate layer.



07 FINISH COLOURING

Now I finish the process of colouring. The colour layer looks like this when the line art layer is hidden. In the spaces where I haven't added additional colour the lighter background tone can be seen.



ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION RULES

DISCOVER THE ANCIENT FORMULA THAT ALFONSO ELOLA USES TO PLAN HIS IMAGES

The golden ratio was discovered by the ancient Greeks and describes a way of composing with harmonious proportions. Here Elola is "placing the elements of composition [more heavily] at the bottom, closer to the viewer. The centre of attention is on the upper right side near the centre. Lighter objects are placed nearer the top – that's lighter visually, not necessarily physical weight. With this rule the composition has depth." You can get some free golden ratio shapes for Photoshop from www.photoshopsecrets.tumblr.com/post/41450884060/golden-ratio-shapes.

Special offer for readers in North America



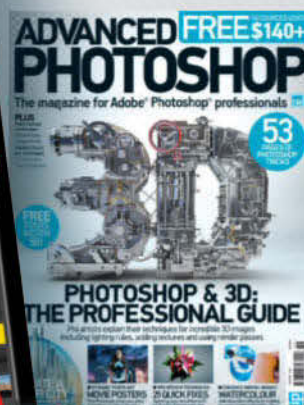
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CREATE A DOUBLE EXPOSURE EFFECT

MIX MULTIPLE IMAGES USING BLEND MODES AND MASKS FOR A DOUBLE EXPOSURE EFFECT

Multiple exposure is a popular photographic technique in which the film is purposefully exposed multiple times, resulting in one or more images superimposed over the original.

Double exposure, as you've probably already surmised, is a blend of two images. It seems to have taken root as the blanket moniker for this style of blended imagery, whether there are just two or many images at play. Photoshop's arsenal of blend modes and layer tricks makes it very well suited for pulling off these types of effects. Stacking images, playing with the various blend modes, and masking unneeded areas is the fundamental workflow for

achieving a double exposure look. Here we'll blend an owl with some scenes from its habitat using the described battle plan. Adjustment layers and filters will then be employed to lock down the look.

After completing the tutorial, try creating your own blends with complementary or dissimilar subjects. Although jarring mash-ups can occasionally be the disappointing result of your blending, stick with it! Elegant and sometimes haunting juxtapositions are up for grabs to those who persist. A good artistic eye can help your judgement in selecting compatible images, while luck and experimentation can lead you to unexpected beauty.



OUR EXPERT

ANDRE VILLANUEVA
www.000-000-0000.com

Villanueva is a former college Photoshop teacher and is currently an art director. Born in the Philippines, he now resides with his family in Alabama, USA. He enjoys sharing his techniques with our readers.

SOURCE FILES

The owl and starting PSD, along with the additional images for blending within the owl, are available from the FileSilo. Feel free to incorporate your own imagery into the mix.

COMMENCE THE BLENDING

SELECT THE OWL USING THE QUICK SELECTION TOOL AND REFINE EDGE, THEN PREPARE THE DOCUMENT

01 ISOLATE THE OWL

Open Owl.psd. Use the Quick Selection tool to select the owl. Go to Select>Refine Edge and use the Refine Radius tool to paint the edges. Play with Adjust Edge settings. For Output, choose Layer Mask and click OK. To fix areas, click mask and use the Brush tool with a Soft Round brush to paint black to hide and white to reveal. Adjust brush size opacity as needed.



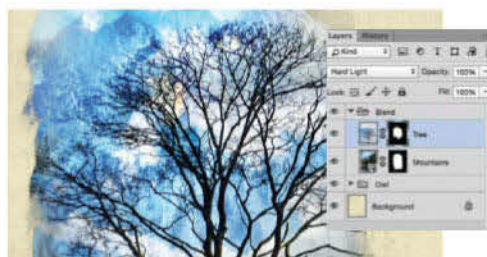
02 PLACE THE OWL

Save and close Owl.psd and open Start.psd. Go to File>Place (Place Linked in CC) and grab Owl.psd. The scale up, position, and confirm. Press the Add layer mask button in the Layers palette. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate. Select the lower layer and apply Color Overlay via the layer palette's fx button. Pick black then click OK. Now paint black in both masks to reduce.



03 ADD MOUNTAINS AND TREES

Select the top layer and Place (Place Embedded in CC) Mountains.jpg. Set to Lighten blend mode. Cmd/Ctrl+click the owl thumbnail and then press the Add layer mask button. Place Tree.jpg then position it and confirm. Set to Hard Light blend mode. Option/Alt+click and drag the previous layer mask over to this layer. Paint black in both masks to reduce.



WORK IN PROGRESS

FROM SIMPLE TO BLENDED



Progress 1: Isolate the owl



Progress 2: Blend multiple images together

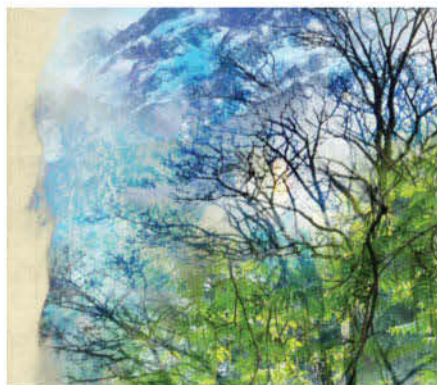


Progress 3: Finalise blending and adjustments



04 BLEND MORE IMAGES

Place Paper.jpg (use Place Embedded in CC from here on out). Set to Overlay blend mode and drop Opacity to 70%. Select the owl again and add a layer mask to this layer. Place Mountains2.jpg and move it upwards. Set to Multiply blend mode. Option/Alt+click the layer mask button to create a mask that hides everything. Paint with white to add. Place Tree.jpg, scale down, position, and confirm. Set to Pin Light blend mode. Option/Alt+click the layer mask button again, then paint with white to add.



05 ADD SOME VIGOR

So far we have an icy mountain range and a skeletal tree. It might be looking a bit bleak, so let's remedy that. Go ahead and place Trees.jpg. Position and confirm. Option/Alt+click the layer mask button again to hide everything, then paint back with white to add. The lush leaves will add some life and vigour to the emerging blend, and the green is a refreshing addition to the palette. We'll continue to add more vitality with subsequent blending.



06 REINFORCE THE OWL

The owl has become buried under the onslaught of nature images. It's time to reinforce it. Let's make a duplicate of the owl – Option/Alt+click and drag the original owl layer (with no Color Overlay) to the top. Click the mask and fill with black (with black as foreground colour, press Option/Alt+Delete/Backspace). Now, paint back with white, focusing particularly in the facial area to restore the eyes and beak. Lightly paint white in other areas such as the sides.



07 BUILD UP IMAGES

Now that we've re-established the owl's features, let's continue to add more images to blend inside the owl's body. Place Base.jpg. Scale down and position so that the arc of trees fits inside the bottom of the owl. Confirm the place. Drop to 80% Opacity. Cmd/Ctrl+click the original Owl layer's thumbnail, then press the Add layer mask button. Paint black to fade the top. Place Cliffs.jpg. Set to Soft Light blend mode. Select the owl again and add a layer mask. Paint black to remove unneeded areas.

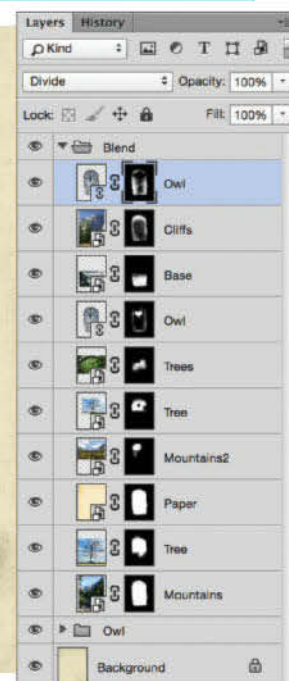
■ QUICK TIP
Stay smart! When playing with images, especially during the initial deployment and arrangement stages, keep your layers as Smart Objects. Unless you're running out of hard drive space, resist the temptation to Rasterize. You'll be able to scale and transform with impunity, always maintaining the original integrity of the images.



08 USE THE DIVIDE BLEND MODE

Let's now use the interesting Divide blend mode to help add some lighter areas. While this blend mode may be somewhat tricky to use in everyday photo editing, it'll be put to good use here to produce some nice highlights. Go ahead and

make another duplicate of the owl (no Color Overlay) – Option/Alt+click and drag the original owl layer to the top. Set the blend mode to Divide. Paint black in the mask to reduce the lightening, paint white to add or restore.

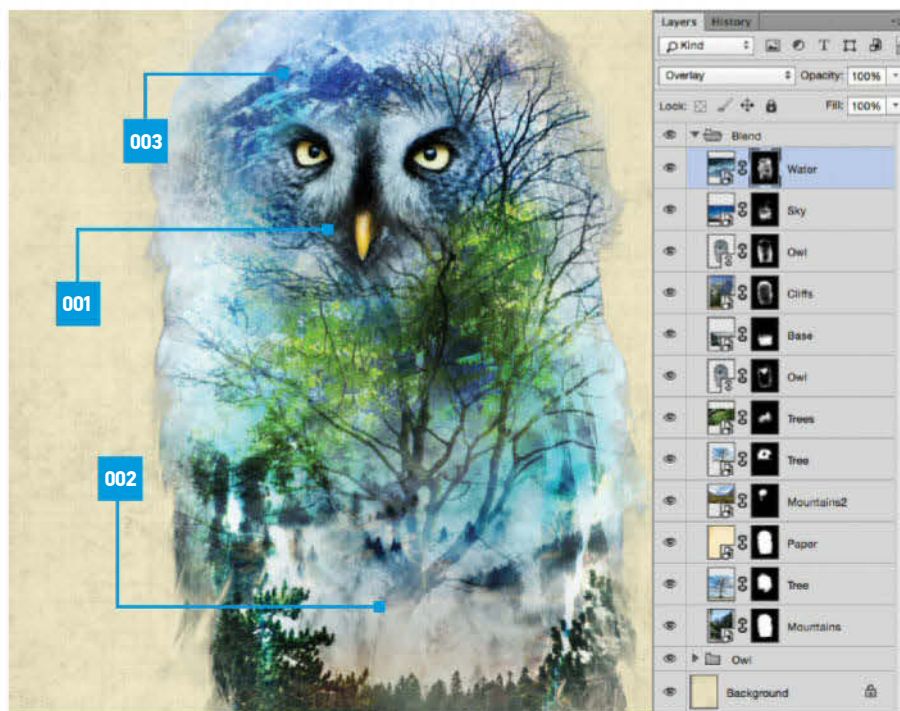


FINALISE THE BASE COMPOSITION

BLEND IN THE LAST IMAGES, PERFORM ANY FINAL REVISIONS, THEN START THE CLOSING ADJUSTMENTS

09 | ADD COOL COLOURING

Place Sky.jpg and position in the lower part of the owl then set it to Color Burn blend mode. Cmd/Ctrl+click the owl layer's thumbnail, then add a layer mask. Paint black to reduce. Place Water.jpg. Set to Overlay blend mode. Cmd/Ctrl+click the owl again and add a layer mask. Paint black to reduce.



001 | OWL FEATURES

The owl was duplicated and brought above to reinstate its features. It was buried under the initial barrage of blending

002 | TREES

Skeletal trees add vein-like detail while lush forestry provides a nice border at the bottom and vitalising colour in the centre

003 | MOUNTAINS

We merged some mountain scenes into the mix, from the majestic peak at top to the foggy base at bottom



11 | ADD SOME WONDER

Let's add a bit of stars and sparkles to make that sky area in the owl's head a bit more enchanting. Place Stars.jpg and position at the top. Set to Overlay blend mode. Cmd/Ctrl+Click the Add layer mask button in the Layers palette. Now paint with white paint in the stars. You can even paint a bit outside of the owl, spilling the stars subtly into the background. You may need to reposition the layer with the Move tool to get the stars arranged nicely.



12 | PERFORM FINAL ARRANGEMENTS AND REVISIONS

We're about to head into the final stages of this project where we'll apply a battery of adjustments and filters to nail down the look we're going for. At this point, take some time to go through the composition and scrutinise the arrangement. Because we haven't Rasterized any of the images we placed, we're free to Scale and Transform without fear of blurring pixels. Make sure to zoom up close and examine mask edges for faint lines you may have missed.



10 | ADD TREES AND CLIFFS

At this point, it looks like we need to bolster the sides of the owl and make the top more scenic. Place Trees2.jpg. Select the original owl again then add a layer mask. Paint black to restore some of the interior detail from the image underneath. Next, place Cliffs.jpg. Position the sky and cliff so they are in the top of the owl's head, then confirm. Select the owl again and add a layer mask. Paint black to remove unneeded areas.

“An artistic eye is helpful, but luck and experimentation can lead you to unexpected beauty”

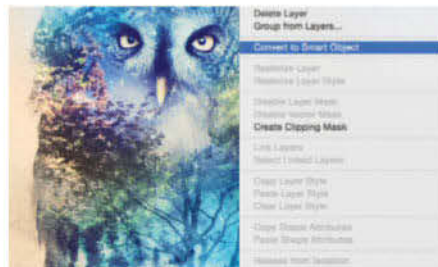
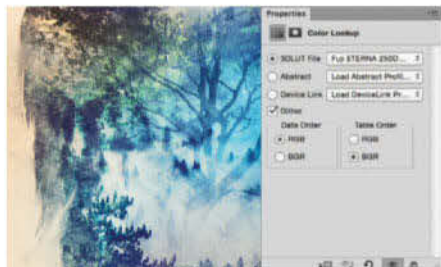


13 | START ADJUSTMENTS

Let's begin our adjustments. It's advisable to create a new group in which we can place the final layers. Click the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette, choose Brightness/Contrast. Increase Brightness to 60, Contrast to 12. Paint black in the mask to reduce in areas. Now add a Solid Color layer with the same button. Pick #f4eabd. Set to Multiply blend mode. Next, add a Levels adjustment layer. Choose the Blue channel. Slide the black Output Levels slider to 115.

FINALISE THE PIECE

APPLY SEVERAL MORE ADJUSTMENTS, THEN CALL UPON THE CAMERA RAW FILTER FOR THE FINISHING TOUCHES



14 ADD MORE ADJUSTMENTS

Let's continue with some more adjustments, again using the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer button at the bottom of the Layers palette. Add a Color Balance adjustment. For Midtones, set the sliders to (from top to bottom) +24, +16, -19. Next, add another Solid Color layer. Pick #35ccff. Set to Color blend mode. Click the mask, press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert. Paint back with white to add some cool touches here and there, both in and out of the owl.

15 UTILISE COLOR LOOKUP

Color Lookup brings a slew of lookup tables, or LUTs. What are these? They're borrowed from the film industry, and they can give your image a subtle or radically-different new look. Here we'll opt for some low-key flavour. Add Color Lookup, choose Candlelight. Drop the layer's Opacity to 70%, and further reduce in areas by painting black in the mask. Add another Color Lookup adjustment, this time choosing Fuji Eterna 250 D Kodak 2395. Drop Opacity to 50% and paint black in the mask to reduce.

16 PREPARE FOR FINAL FILTERS

For the final two steps, we'll be using the Camera Raw filter. For users without the filter, you can use substitutes. For Step 17, try using Gaussian Blur at 10 pixels, and set the layer to Lighten. For Step 18, you can use the trusty Unsharp Mask or the newer Smart Sharpen. Adjust sharpness to suit your taste. Now, select the group at the top. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Option/Alt+Shift+E. Right-click on the layer and choose Convert to Smart object from the contextual pop-up menu.



17 GET A DREAMY LOOK

We just merged layers. This invaluable command dumps a composite of the visible image onto a new layer. This lets us apply overall filter effects. Let's work with Camera Raw and its fabulous Clarity setting, which adjusts midtone contrast. We'll first reduce this to get a dreamy effect. Go to Filter>Camera Raw Filter. Drag Clarity all the way to the left. Click OK. Paint black in the smart filter mask to remove from areas, restoring the original look in areas.



GROUP ADJUSTMENTS

It's a good idea to keep your adjustment layers in a group. By doing so, you can turn the visibility on and off to see how the adjustments are affecting your image. You can also lower the group's opacity to tone down all the adjustments at once. You can even try applying blend modes for some potentially wild results. If you have a set of adjustments you want to replicate in another image (say you want to do a series of these double exposure animals), just drag the folder over. You may need to adjust the masks you've fiddled with.

QUICK TIP

Not sure which blend mode to use? No problem, just cycle through them. Use Shift+Plus (+) and Shift-Minus (-) to shuffle through the modes. Even if you're dead-set on a particular mode, it may still be prudent to shop around. You never know what intriguing blends are around the corner.



18 ADD CLARITY

Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the layer. Click on the Smart Filter mask, and fill with white (with white as foreground colour, press Option/Alt+Delete/Backspace). Double-click Camera Raw Filter under the layer to edit the smart filter. Slide Clarity rightward to around +30-35. Click OK. Option/Alt-Click the Add layer mask button in the Layers palette. Now paint with white to add detail. Go back and forth between this layer mask and the previous layer's smart filter mask to get the optimal balance.

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DESIGNING FOR ADVERTS

NOMINATED FOR THE IMAGE (COMMISSIONED) CATEGORY IN THE ARCHITECTURAL 3D AWARDS 2015, THIS POSTER DESIGN FOR TFL SAW CREATORS RADOXIST STUDIO COMBINE 3D AND PHOTOSHOP TO GREAT EFFECT

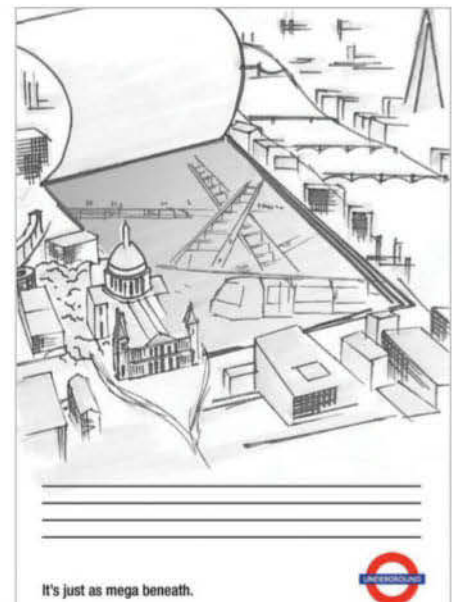
When a small studio gets a commission as big as a poster design for the London Underground, you'd think that they'd really have to work to win it. That wasn't the case for Radoxist Studio's commission Just As Mega Beneath – the agency handling the work picked them especially. "TMP came to us directly. I think it is because we have done some work together before then and we really enjoy the cooperation," explains Radoxist's lead visual artist Radoslav Žilinský. "They see us as a strong partner that can be relied on. And it is a two-way relationship too. I really like how they communicate, it feels like they are putting effort and care into it."

So which parts of the project were down to TMP and which were done by Radoxist Studio? Žilinský says that this varies depending on the agency and the job. "It is never the same. Many times the agencies are not able to have a perspective of what can be done, which tools to pick and how long would it take. So [this time] they came with a pencil sketch and brief and it was our part to discuss how it will look. So basically, they came with a sketched idea, we have done the full resolution artwork, and then they cropped the formats and put typography on the final layouts."

Radoxist Studio is no stranger to working with big-name clients, including a campaign celebrating Magnum's 25th birthday. The small studio punches well above its weight creatively, an ability that's perhaps enhanced by the way that it works. Žilinský is the main driving force behind the studio, which he set up after becoming a successful 3D artist. "I had the nickname Radoxist before as a 3D artist. First I did pictures just as personal artworks, to learn 3D software and to build my visions. Some of the artworks were quite successful and gained some awards too. I caught a lot of attention on the internet and [started to get] commercial jobs. It was the time that my career slowly shifted from personal to commercial stuff."

"The philosophy of Radoxist studio comes from me as a person. I never want to become a factory for visuals with an army of soldiers, like for example Ars Thanea. For me it's about much more sympathetic studios like Sagmeister & Walsh. Small private and exclusive studios that take great care with every project. The feeling that comes from soul rather than ego."

"But less philosophically, it is basically about me as an artist and [in terms of how the studio works] one guy is sitting next to me that helps me all the time. Then when a project comes



THE BRIEF

Project: Just As Mega Beneath
Agency: TMP worldwide / UK
Client: Transport for London
Visual production: Radoxist Studio
Lead visual artist: Radoslav Žilinský
Head of CGI: Jakub Goda
3D artists: Daniel Lešták, Aleš Zvolánek, Miloš Jakubec, Braňo Adamčík
Creative direction: Alistair Wotton
Copywriting: Dan Turner
Art direction: Lucy Adela-Smith
Concept: Dan Turner, Lucy Adela-Smith

"[The clients] were attracting commercial managers to join London Underground and the only way to do it was to make an amazing and eye catching visual. They wanted to show them how complex and interesting London is beneath and we [were tasked with] realising their vision."

RADOXIST STUDIO

WWW.RADOXIST.COM

RADOSLAV ŽILINSKÝ
LEAD VISUAL ARTIST



JAKUB GODA
HEAD OF CGI







Inside Radoxist Studio: Radoxist Studio is a small team led by Radoslav Žilinský, with creative specialists invited in to contribute to projects on an ad-hoc basis

along I usually assemble the team from my friends, partners or other guys that I admire on the internet.

"For example, on the big project that we were working on at the beginning of 2015, the character concept artist was a girl from the US and her concepts were turned into reality by a talented character artist from Bulgaria. Four other guys working on this project were local friends."

This collaborative workflow is extended to other creatives working in the same building as Radoxist Studio, which is "based in a co-working centre in Bratislava, in an old thread factory. It was very famous in this region and there is also a book coming out about its history. Now, it is like a big community of art, photographic and architecture ateliers. For us, it is a great space where we can do our projects. For example, when I want to shoot, I just need to go one floor downstairs to atelier Bavlna." And as the studio grew, so too did its working practices and toolkit. "We are really well known for our CGI works I think. But there is more than that. Back then [when I started the studio], I slowly realised

that I do not want to be stuck in CGI forever. I wanted to explore other techniques too and became more like a generalist; to have all the tools necessary to build every kind of awesome artwork. The more tools you master, the freer you feel as an artist," Žilinský explains.

For this project, Radoxist Studio started with the 3D assets they needed to create the main artwork, and one of the first things they needed to do was get an accurate look at the London streets they'd be representing in the poster. "We had a meeting with my head of CGI, Jakub Goda, and discussed how we would start. We opened up Google Earth and tried to find an ideal location for peeling back the ground in London. We were lucky to find a good angle and made a simple sketch that we sent to the agency for approval. It was important to see some well-known London landmarks – Big Ben worked like a charm. I was leading the project, art directing CGI and doing the final retouching and colour grading. Jakub was responsible for putting together a scene in 3D and supplying me with render layers. All the other guys – Daniel Lešták, Aleš Zvolánek,

“We opened up Google Earth and tried to find an ideal location for peeling back the ground in London. We were lucky to find a good angle and made a simple sketch that we sent to the agency”

Miloš Jakubec, Braňo Adamčík – were modelling different kinds of buildings and supplying them to Jakub."

"The most challenging [aspect] was to tune the expectations of client and agency with the real possibilities of what could be done in terms of budget and timeline" – the studio was given just a month to complete the project – "Originally they wanted at least six different landmarks to be seen in the final visual and an overview of a larger part of the city. But we knew that this was not going to work in terms of perspective, scale and the work that needed to be done. So we came up

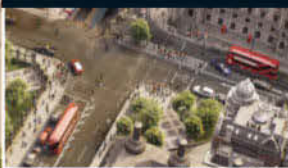


Underground infrastructure: The poster was designed to recruit commercial managers for Transport for London, so it needed to reflect the stations and construction projects that they'd be running

Peeling back the surface: The key element of the brief was that the surface of London was being peeled away to show that the city's infrastructure is just as big and important underneath



London streets: It was important to reflect the busy atmosphere of central London and some of its iconic features – red buses, telephone boxes and a Union Jack Mini all make an appearance alongside pedestrians and traffic

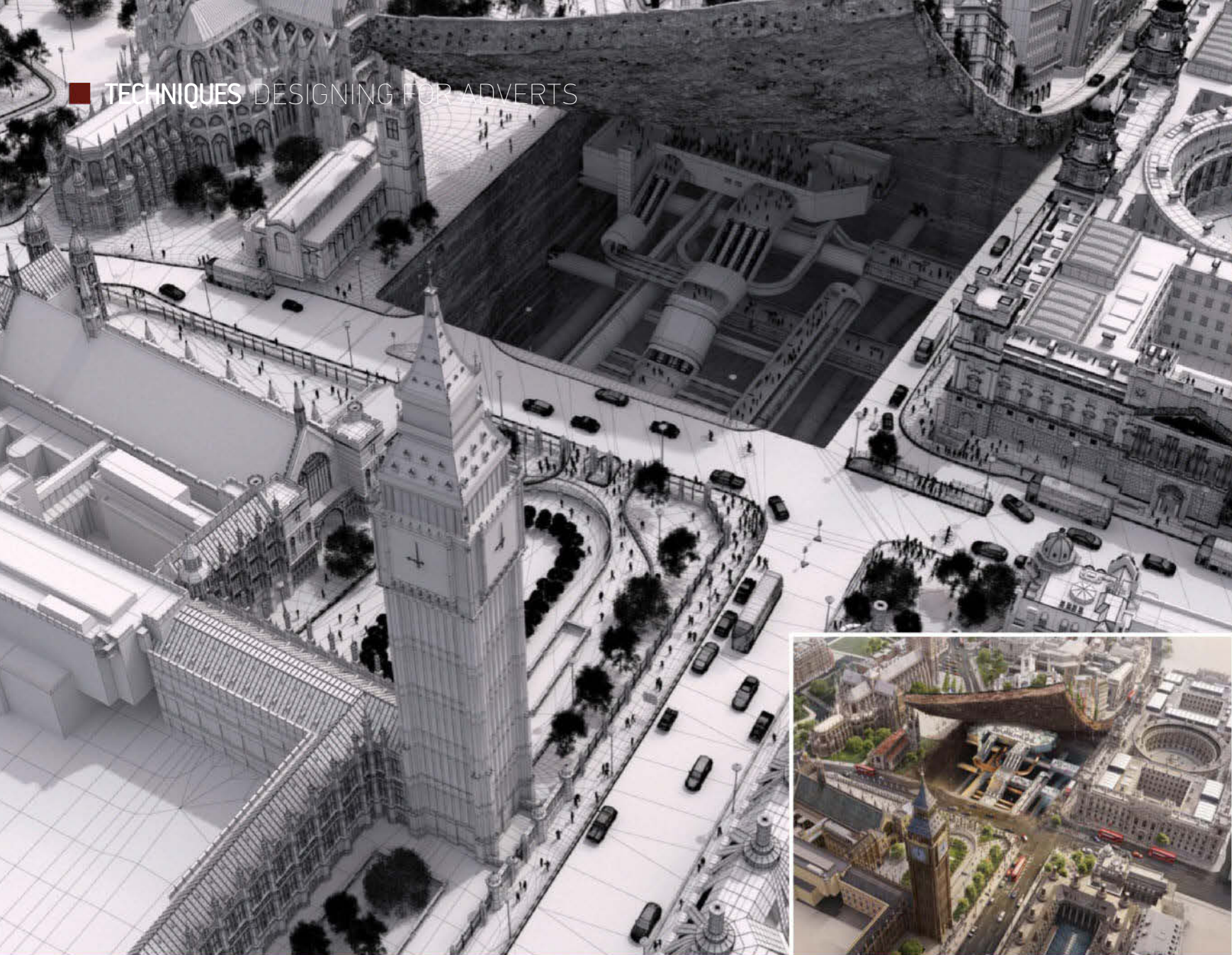


Key landmarks: The brief originally called for a wider panorama of London with more of the city on show, but time and compositional constraints made Radoxist Studio rethink this and concentrate on Big Ben as an immediate icon of London



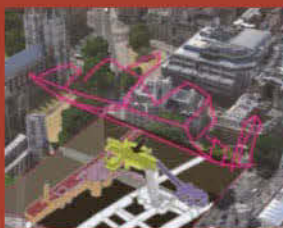
Classic typography: Once the visuals were completed, the message of the advert was added in TfL's iconic Johnston font





FROM GOOGLE EARTH TO FINISHED WORK

JAKUB GODA REVEALS THE PROCESS BEHIND THE 3D VISUALS THAT UNDERPIN THE POSTER



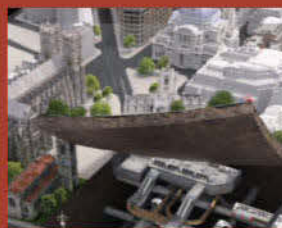
01 FIND THE LOCATION

It was very important for the whole image to find the right composition, one that is showing some of the London landmarks, provides a nice, appealing view and at the same time is feasible to accomplish in a relatively short period of time. We used Google Maps for this.



03 CREATE LIGHTING IN 3D AND PHOTOSHOP

The final raw render looks quite flat compared to the final image because we were rendering additional lighting passes that were added later in post. We were experimenting with these along the way and it was a kind of back and forth process between 3D and 2D. Orange tinted backlight was rendered separately (as well as the blue light from the left side) and it was selectively added in post.



02 BUILD THE SCENE

While I was working on underground section and infrastructure, other guys were preparing models of all the surrounding buildings. Big Ben and Westminster Abbey (as well as some other details, such as cars, trees etc) are stock models bought online.



04 COMPOSITE AND RETOUCH

This is a composite of all the render passes before retouching. In most cases we were trying to have the detail already in the 3D renders such as details on buildings, in the underground section, infrastructure, people, cars, vegetation etc. Some parts were relying on retouching though because it was more efficient – for example straight lines on the edges of the underground hole or soil particles falling off from the peel.



Creative space: Radoxist Studio is based in an old factory in Bratislava, Slovakia, that is now home to a group of creative studios

“When you are doing a complex scene you always end up with some parts that are not completely realistic, so we used matte painting techniques in Photoshop to fine-tune the parts”

with this alternative with just one big well-known landmark and I love the feeling that eventually it turned out really great.”

Once the basic 3D was assembled, Photoshop became the key tool in the process. “In this project, Photoshop was a great help. When you are doing a complex scene in 3D like this one, you always end up with some parts that are not completely realistic. So we used matte painting techniques in Photoshop to fine-tune the parts. We also added a good amount of the small, but very necessary details in Photoshop too: dust, particles, rocks, damaged roads, mud, Banksy artworks and many other things that create the specific atmosphere of the overall image.

“What I was surprised with in this project was that Photoshop really handled this kind of complex and 11,000x7,000 pixels resolution file with great performance. Secondly I love the layer organisation in Photoshop. When you are painting something, the

speed of the artist’s response is the most important, [rather than things like] layer organisation, but when you are dealing with a complex scene like this one, you have to be very careful not to get lost inside the file.

“I definitely love the Refine Edge tool – when I use it with constant edge detection radius and want to go back to the original edge on some areas I usually use a History brush for this. This way I have better control over opacity and other parameters.

I also use a Black & White adjustment to create various selections. This way I can use colours to help isolate part of the image that I want to use as a selection. A classic example is a tree in front of the sky – using Black & White I can take advantage of the colours and tone up the greens and tone down the blues in the sky. This can help me create a better selection without any spills and additional tweaks.”



Details count: The image needed to accurately represent the London that Underground commuters are familiar with, so iconic street art by Banksy was added in to enhance the realism of the piece

GOING UNDERGROUND



01 | REALISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The underground section was quite challenging to make look good, it took some experimenting and designing to get to the final look. We just knew that it needed to look cool, quite complicated and *mega*, but at the same time it should make sense somehow and convince viewers that the actual underground infrastructure may look more or less similar to this.



02 | YELLOW AND BLUE LIGHTING

We were experimenting with lighting quite a lot and we were considering the addition of yellow reflector light and blue tinted light from the right side in order to make the whole part a bit more interesting and eye catching.



03 | LIGHTING PASS IN PHOTOSHOP

In the end we decided not to show the reflector itself, but to use the yellow lighting (rendered separately) without showing the light source itself. As we were progressing we saw that the underground section looked good by itself and we didn’t need to distract the viewer. An additional lightning pass render for the underground section was added in post.



04 | TEXTURE AND DETAIL

Details were added incrementally on the way (elevator, ventilation, glass elements, piano player etc.). We used different material for the shafts in order to get some variation in the look of the underground section and make it more interesting.



05 | FINAL RETOUCHING IN PHOTOSHOP

This is the final retouched version where the edges were destroyed, soil was enhanced, particles and dust were added as well as many more additional details, like people, traffic, street art and much more.



A monitor giant: The NEC MultiSync is big, bulky and jam-packed with great features

NEC MULTISYNC PA322UHD

ARE BIGGER MONITORS ALWAYS BETTER? WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE NEW, HEAVYWEIGHT, 4K NEC MONITOR AND TEST OUT WHETHER IT'S AN ENORMOUS SUCCESS OR JUST A BIG DISAPPOINTMENT

www.necdisplay.com

SPECIFICATIONS:

• OS: Windows, Mac

£2,782

\$2,999

Technology goes through phases of either getting bigger or smaller. Mobile phones are a good indication of this: years ago they were brick-sized, before scaling down to fit pockets, and now smartphones are slowly growing again to the size of small tablets.

The colossal new MultiSync monitor from NEC is most definitely part of this latest 'bigger is better' trend. It weighs 20kg and at 32-inches wide, it's as big as a lot of televisions. It's far from a sleek, slim flat-screen though: it looks robust, bulky and almost indestructible. The black, matte finish doesn't exactly ooze style either. It isn't designed to look modern so much as intimidating.

But while the MultiSync and particularly the stand feel hard and sturdy, the screen swivels with almost weightless grace. Unlock the switch on the back of the stand, and the monitor can swing to a portrait orientation, only just clearing the surface on which you place it, and it's also adjustable in any direction.

Set-up is simple and it's not the futuristic, lightweight screen that you'd expect from a 4K monitor. Because of this though it makes sense to use the MultiSync not as a secondary screen to aid your work, but as the focal point of your display: with such high specifications, it's unlikely that your primary monitor will be more impressive in performance or build.



Swing and swivel: The monitor can rotate and be adjusted into almost any direction

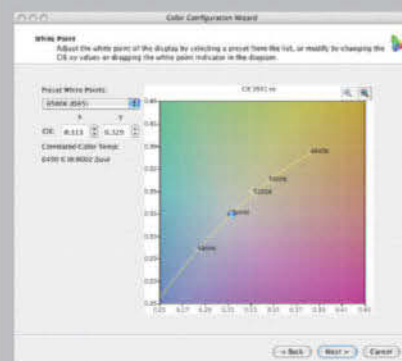
LARGE FOOTPRINT



Sits low: The giant monitor only just clears the surface of your desk

This is not a monitor for small studio spaces by any means, and if you're planning to invest in one of these for use at home then you'll need to make sure you've got a sturdy desk and plenty of room. On the plus side, it's so large that there's really no need to use a dual-monitor setup.

NEC MULTIPROFILER



The ultimate sidekick to NEC's high-quality MultiSync monitors, Multiprofiler is a software program built for getting the most out of your visuals. It's a free download on the NEC website, compatible with Windows, Mac and Linux operating systems, and it uses a processor called SpectraView, which NEC boasts to be sophisticated enough to provide unparalleled screen quality.

Load a specific colour profile to the program – or choose from the familiar sRGB and Adobe RGB settings, along with DCI, DICOM and REC-BT709 profiles – and the software will help configure your MultiSync to pinpoint aspects of your display you didn't even realise needed perfecting.

As well as this Picture Mode, Multiprofiler can help with video resolution too. The MultiSync series all come with PIP (Picture-in-Picture) capabilities, meaning that they can display multiple videos on the same screen without compromise of quality: should you get Multiprofiler, it's also worth calibrating your screen to tweak the display for these settings too.



Mount: Despite its huge size, the screen can tilt with effortless grace and even be set up in portrait format

“The MultiSync PA322UHD is clearly built for any Photoshop user seeking the ultimate designing experience. It dissolves the barrier between your eyes and the final product.”

The MultiSync PA322UHD packs in about as much as you could possibly want from a 4K screen. A designer or artist using Photoshop on this monumental monitor will see how useful this hi-res display is for their work, and the sheer clarity that the screen provides will help any creative bring out the very best from their artwork.

The incredible 3,840 x 2,160 display is so detailed that it will shrink everything on your screen and transform everything with pin-sharp clarity: icons will become smaller in Photoshop, and essentials such as the colour tab are suddenly so much clearer and more precise. Opening any image illuminates detail, noise and colour like never before, and even the highest-quality tablets on the market can't compete with the utterly impressive detail and resolution that you get from the MultiSync.

The colour and brightness are obviously also huge selling points for the NEC MultiSync too. Set the mode of the monitor to Adobe RGB and the MultiSync is 100 per cent colour-accurate: there's the ability to change individual strands of colour on the monitor's screen by adjusting the Red, Green, Blue, Cyan, Magenta, or Yellow channels – so that pretty much covers both CMYK and RGB settings – and the brightness can reach a head-splitting 350cd/m2.

The MultiSync is almost perfect in terms of its display. The contrast is lacking, but aside from that, the resolution is stunning and easily adjustable, from the menu located on the bottom-right of the monitor.

The MultiSync PA322UHD is clearly built for any Photoshop user seeking the ultimate designing experience. It dissolves the barrier between your eyes and the final product: detail and colour are so precise that you'd have trouble going back to an ordinary HD screen, even if you're someone who

doesn't really need half of the vast array of features that the MultiSync offers.

Even the ports at the back of the monitor offer more than you'll probably need. The MultiSync comes with a whopping four HDMI inputs, twin DVI inputs, twin DisplayPort inputs, and an OPS-compatible slot on the monitor's right-hand edge. There are even mounting holes for the monitor, which enable movement forwards, backwards and even 90-degrees to portrait mode: the MultiSync also has an auto-rotate feature that automatically flips your display according to how you're working. For such a sturdy-looking beast of a monitor, it certainly feels accommodating for a range of set-ups: some designers might want a separate portrait and landscape monitor, but when the MultiSync is this powerful and flexible, there's no reason it can't be both.

Everything is bigger, bolder and mighty hefty with the MultiSync: unfortunately, that includes the price. The high price might put off a fair share of those interested, but it's not uncommon to see monitors with twice that RRP for not nearly as immaculate a display. It's the epitome of substance over style: it's pragmatic and user-friendly, and it's hard to argue with such stunning results.

VERDICT

Features: **8/10**
Ease of use: **9/10**
Quality of results: **10/10**
Value for money: **8/10**

FINAL SCORE: 9/10

OTHER OPTIONS ON THE MARKET



BENQ PG2401PT £900

BenQ's first foray into the world of colour-critical monitors, the PG2401PT is a cheaper option for a top quality monitor, but a worthy competitor for the MultiSync all the same. It's stylish, wonderfully simple to use and boasts portrait orientation like the MultiSync, but unfortunately can't compete with higher resolution machines.



NEC MULTISYNC P242W £710

With only 75 per cent Adobe RGB coverage, the P242W is a significant comedown from the PA322UHD, but for about a third of the price. It's a viable option for any designer seeking a good monitor. Aside from the display, it's a similar beast to the PA322UHD: it's thick, strong and supported by the same stocky stand. The screen is 24 inches wide, but the resolution only measures in at 1,920 x 1,200.



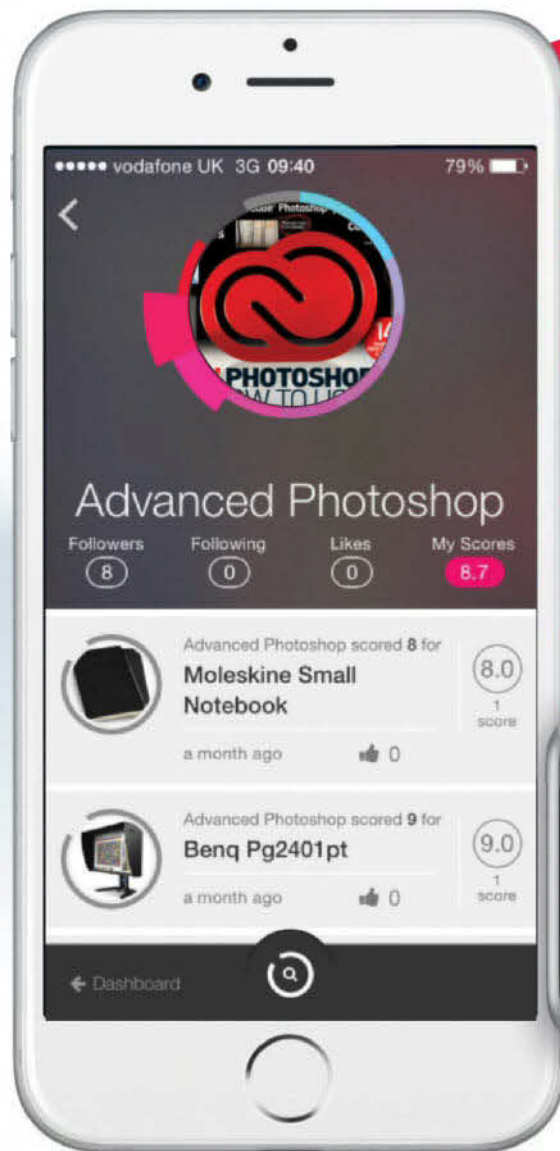
APPLE 27 INCH THUNDERBOLT DISPLAY £899

Apple products famously work best with other Apple products, so if you're looking for a monitor to handle things such as high-definition FaceTime and a good speaker system to use with your iTunes, this may be the monitor for you. Not specifically designed for Photoshop, but the Thunderbolt does have 16.7million colours, and at 1000:1, a greater contrast ratio than the MultiSync.

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CHILLBLAST PHOTO OC MOBILE

WE TEST THE CHILLBLAST LAPTOP DESIGNED TO MAKE YOUR PHOTOSHOP EXPERIENCE EVEN EASIER



www.chillblast.com

PLATFORMS:

- Windows 7 and above

£1199

\$1907 (APPROX)

With so many accessories on the market able to transform your Photoshop experience, it's easy to forget the fundamental necessity to great designing: a great computer.

What makes a great computer though has perhaps never been less certain. Many people choose to build their own or improve an existing machine these days; technology seems to be moving to tablets and storage seems to be moving online. If you're a designer, it's hard to know exactly what to want from a computer, which makes the Chillblast PC all the more useful.

The Photo OC Mobile is a laptop specifically designed for the use of designers and artists. It looks and feels beautiful to handle, with a sleek space-grey finish and matte touch, but more importantly, it's higher resolution than your average laptop; the HD 1920 x 1080 display is superb – as is the fact that the

Photo OC Mobile has a non-reflective screen – the colour accuracy and vivid brightness are perfect and will suit all your Photoshop requirements. The first impressions of this laptop are great, and are even greater when you realise that the processor is almost completely silent.

In fact, the processor is perhaps the most impressive thing about the Photo OC Mobile. It has a video card of 2GB of dedicated video RAM that is compatible with NVIDIA's Optimus. This means that should you not need to run all that RAM at once, the video card goes into a kind of power saver mode. The effect of this power though is staggering; Photoshop loads up almost



■ FIVE OF THE BEST FEATURES

A CLOSER LOOK AT SOME OF THE KEY ASPECTS OF THE PHOTO OC MOBILE

■ RESOLUTION

The Photo OC Mobile boasts an HD 1920 x 1080 display. It isn't 4K but considering the limited screen size of the laptop, that's about as high quality as you could want.

■ NON-REFLECTIVE SCREEN

The laptop comes with a matte-style screen that can protect you from glare or sunlight. It makes the Photo OC Mobile feel truly mobile, and enables you to work anywhere you like.

■ OPTIMUS

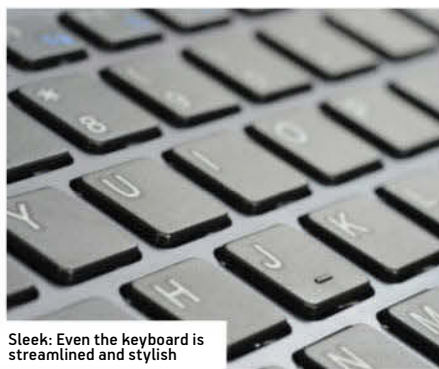
NVIDIA's Optimus feature means that should your Photo Mobile OC be running programs that don't require the huge disk space and RAM capabilities that the laptop needs, a smaller Intel video card takes over from the GTX 850M.

■ VIDEO CARD

The superb graphics of the computer are controlled by an NVIDIA GTX video card with 2GB of dedicated video RAM. The laptop has excellent response rates and 16GB disk space, operating at 160MHz.

■ PROCESSOR AND RAM

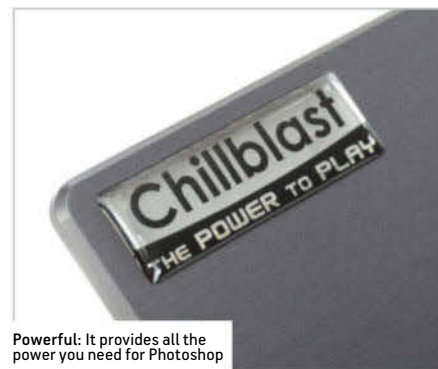
By far the most impressive aspect of the laptop, the Photo OC Mobile comes with a Core i7 4700MQ quad-core processor and 16GB of 1600MHz DDR3 memory: powerful enough to run Photoshop documents of any size.



Sleek: Even the keyboard is streamlined and stylish



Thin: The laptop is slim – perfect for working on the go



Powerful: It provides all the power you need for Photoshop

“The Photo OC Mobile is more than just a necessity for screen resolution and colour accuracy, it's a time-saver”

instantaneously without any need to buffer, and there's absolutely no lagging while you're working either, no matter what size your files reach. It's only after working on the Photo OC Mobile that you realise a great computer is more than just a necessity for screen resolution and colour accuracy, it's a time-saver.

Elsewhere, Chillblast offer good specs without any other outstanding features; the speakers are good quality, but the bass lacks a kick, as you'd

expect from a laptop; the 120GB hard drive is big enough, but you may still want external storage, and the mouse pad isn't as freely manoeuvrable as you might wish. Considering the incredible power of the laptop though, these are just niggles; consider too the price of £1199 when compared to top-of-the-range desktop computers, and it's certainly worth investing in if you're an artist looking for a computer to specifically meet your needs.

VERDICT

Features: **7/10**
Ease of use: **9/10**
Quality of results: **10/10**
Value for money: **8/10**

FINAL SCORE: 9/10

Not a perfect laptop, but the Photo OC Mobile has everything that you'll need; principally, the power that Photoshop requires

CREATIVE CONCEPTS

PHOTOGRAPHER AND PHOTOSHOP-MANIPULATOR MUHAMMAD MUNIR TALKS ABOUT ADDING HUMOUR AND IMAGINATION TO HIS IMAGES

Muhammad Munir started to learn Photoshop seriously while starting his career in wedding photography. He frequently injects humour into his personal work, but also knows when to keep it serious thanks to the way he plans out his composites. We caught up with him to find out more.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE?

I like to edit my photos using Photoshop and composite multiple images into one picture element that matches the theme or concept that I want. I love conceptual photography, whether that's a portrait, photo story or something surreal with edgy style and crisp colour as in the form of a magazine cover or movie poster, or even as a commercial advertisement. I am the type of person who is always cheerful, likes joking and being relaxed. Easy going.

Maybe my photographs are always likely to be affected by my nature. I love the actualisation of everyday life into the concept of my photos. But not infrequently I also like the concept of serious photos.

WHEN DID YOU START USING PHOTOSHOP?

I've known Photoshop since 2000, as I recall it was still Photoshop 8. But I seriously learnt Photoshop in 2008 because I was also pursuing a wedding photography course so I also had to learn to edit the photos. At the beginning of 2012 I also learned other software such as Adobe Lightroom and Camera Raw, but still work mainly with my current Photoshop, CS6, with software plug-ins such as Alien Skin and NIK Software.

WHAT'S A TYPICAL WORK DAY FOR YOU?

My daily job is as a wedding photographer, but I sometimes I also accept jobs as a food, product and



OUR READER
MUHAMMAD MUNIR

www.muncephotography.weebly.com



Children Of Steel:
The vulnerability of children is a recurring theme in Munir's work

All article images © Muhammad Munir



“The most challenging aspect of photomanipulation is to combine so many elements into one dramatic and storytelling photo”



Jadis Narnia: Currently working predominantly as a wedding photographer, Munir would like to move into more advertising work



Fight Club: His own sense of humour rings clear in Munir's work, but he says his manipulations are also inspired by Tim Tadder, Joel Grimmes, Benjamin Von Wong, Chase Jarvis, Adrian Sommeling and Calvin Hollywood

Rocker: This is another very recent image of Munir's, and again his Dodge and Burn technique was put to good use





Imagination:
In terms of photography, Munir
says that he is inspired by Joe
McNally and Karl Taylor

“First, learn basic photography correctly, because
the understanding of basic photography will
make photo-editing much easier for you”



Shark Attack:
Munir picks out "Layer masking, Refine
Edge, Filter Blur, blending modes, Gradient
tool, Clone Stamp and Healing Brush," as
his favourite Photoshop features



The Last Hope

THEN AND NOW

The Last Hope is an image that Munir created about two years ago. He says that this was at the beginning of his journey to learn photo-editing and manipulation and that "there are still some minor errors on the placement of highlights and shadows as well as the placement of water sparks. But in my opinion, this photo has a story, ideas and strong concepts." Sliders is a more recent image, having been created a few months ago. He says the result is crisper and makes better use of his Dodge and Burn technique. He has also played more with "colour and tone, making the result more dramatic like an advertising campaign or commercial advertising photography."



Sliders

portrait photographer. Someday I want to pursue a job in the field of advertising photography, as a visual artist and I hope to work with people who are competent in the commercial industry, advertising, film and fashion.

I have my own photo studio and every day I take portrait photos, family or product shots. Sometimes once a week I receive a wedding photo job. In addition, I also sometimes take a job out of town or outdoor photography. In my spare time, I work with the local photography community, often organising photo sessions along with a variety of concepts. Even

occasionally a few friends or the community ask me to be a speaker in the photography workshop.

WHAT CAMERA DO YOU USE?

I use a Nikon D300s with Nikkor 50mm f1.8 lens and Tamron 17-50 mm f2.8. I also [have] two speedlights, some studio lights, and a diffuser softbox.

WHAT ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHIC MANIPULATION DO YOU FIND THE MOST CHALLENGING?

The most challenging aspect of photomanipulation is to combine so many elements/objects into one

dramatic and storytelling photo. In terms of editing and photomanipulation, the most interesting and difficult aspect for me is to put the colour, mood and tone in, also the placement of the highlights and shadows of objects. When it comes to retouching wedding and beauty shots, I always conceptualise a photograph, whether it is for commercial or editorial, I try to make something different, [and] always explore the creativity and uniqueness in the work. How far do I like to go? I would go as far as possible, as long as time, energy, thoughts, and tools are still able to support me... But sometimes there are certainly obstacles and barriers, I sometimes find it difficult to co-ordinate with the makeup artist, wardrobe, and props when I conceptualise a photograph.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER YOUNG CREATIVES?

First, learn basic photography correctly, because the understanding of basic photography will make photo editing much easier for you.

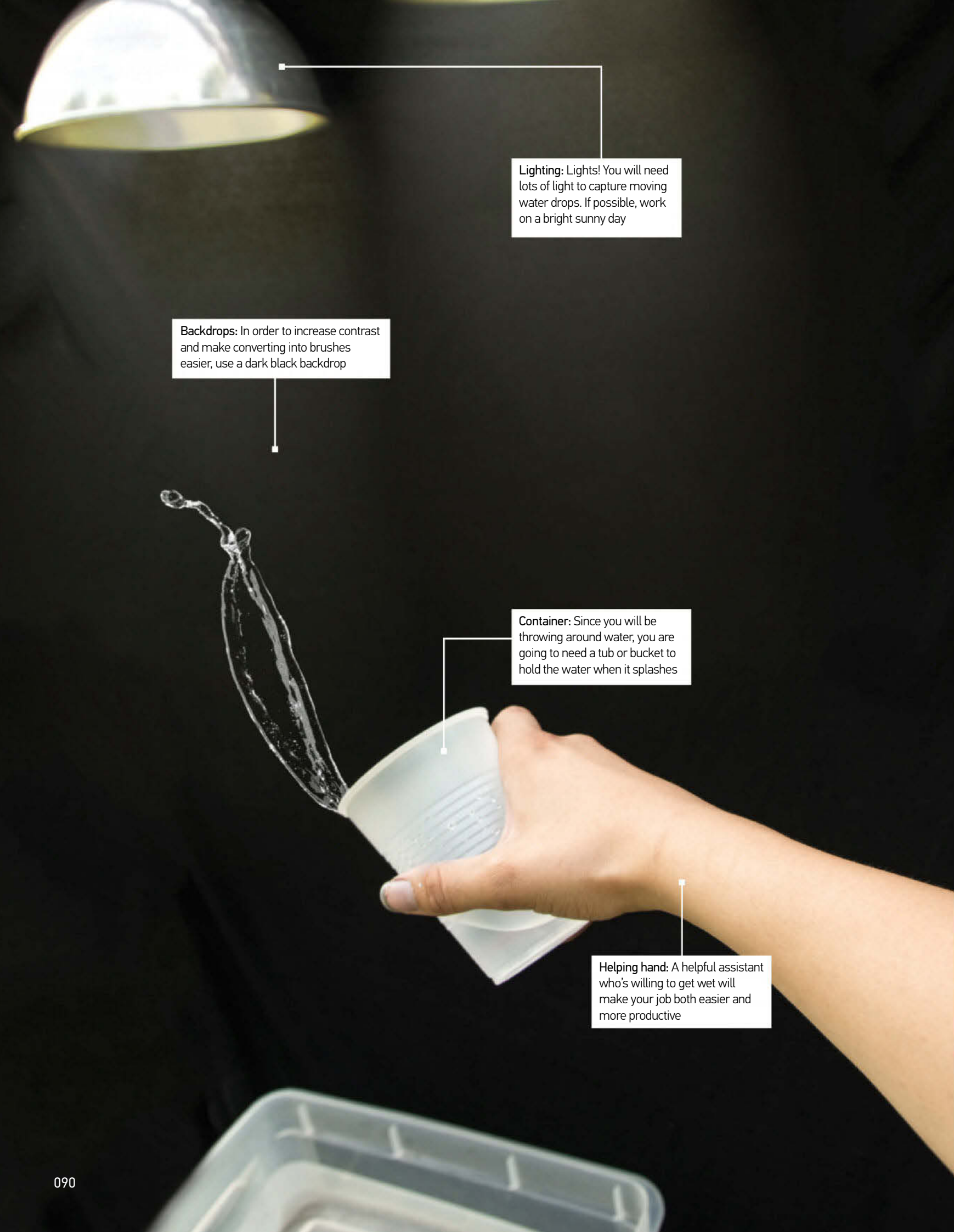
Second, learn the basics of photo editing using Photoshop, such as image selection, layer masking and blending.

Third, to make a good photomanipulation, sketch beforehand, so you know what photos need to be combined into a single image.

The last and most important thing is to increase your imagination and your creativity, observe the work of your idols, or the work of anyone who you think is good. Keep learning and doing. Nothing is instant, so just enjoy the process.



Tomb Raider 1 Survival Edition



Lighting: Lights! You will need lots of light to capture moving water drops. If possible, work on a bright sunny day

Backdrops: In order to increase contrast and make converting into brushes easier, use a dark black backdrop

Container: Since you will be throwing around water, you are going to need a tub or bucket to hold the water when it splashes

Helping hand: A helpful assistant who's willing to get wet will make your job both easier and more productive

MAKE WATER SPLASHES

LEARN HOW TO MAKE AWESOME WATER SPLASH EFFECTS TO USE IN YOUR DIGITAL ARTWORK

How can you add a splash to your digital work? Well, aside from drowning your computer in the pool, it's pretty simple. In this tutorial you will learn how to set up, photograph and edit water splashes to be used in all sorts of digital

projects. This is a very inexpensive project and requires no special equipment. However, it is time consuming. To get the perfect few shots, you will need to be patient and dedicated. It will take sifting through hundreds of shots to find one that is sharp, interesting, and actually has

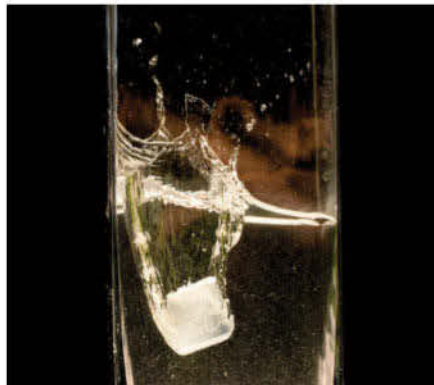
the splash in the frame. Fortunately the results are well worth it and can be used in many types of projects regardless of the season. Though the project can be tedious, with the help of an assistant or two, the work can be fun in the sun while also being productive.

ICE CUBE SPLASHES

HOW TO MAKE SPLASHES WITH WATER THROUGH A GLASS



01 SET UP YOUR SHOOT
The set-up for this is relatively simple. A flat faced vase filled less than halfway with water and some ice cubes. You can also use reusable, clear ice cubes so you don't have to keep refilling your ice.



02 DROP THE CUBE
Drop your ice cube into the water. You maybe need to adjust the water level in the vase so the splash doesn't go over the edge. You will need to shoot, and shoot and shoot.



03 KEEP IT CLEAN
Remember to wipe the inside of the vase in between each splash. Wipe the front and back of the vase to avoid spotting, be sure to have lots of towels handy.

FLYING WATER

THROW THE WATER TO CREATE SPLASHES



01 POSITION YOUR ASSISTANT
Have your assistant stand next to your empty bucket, with a filled bucket beside them. They will have to be quick about filling their hands with water to achieve maximum splash power.



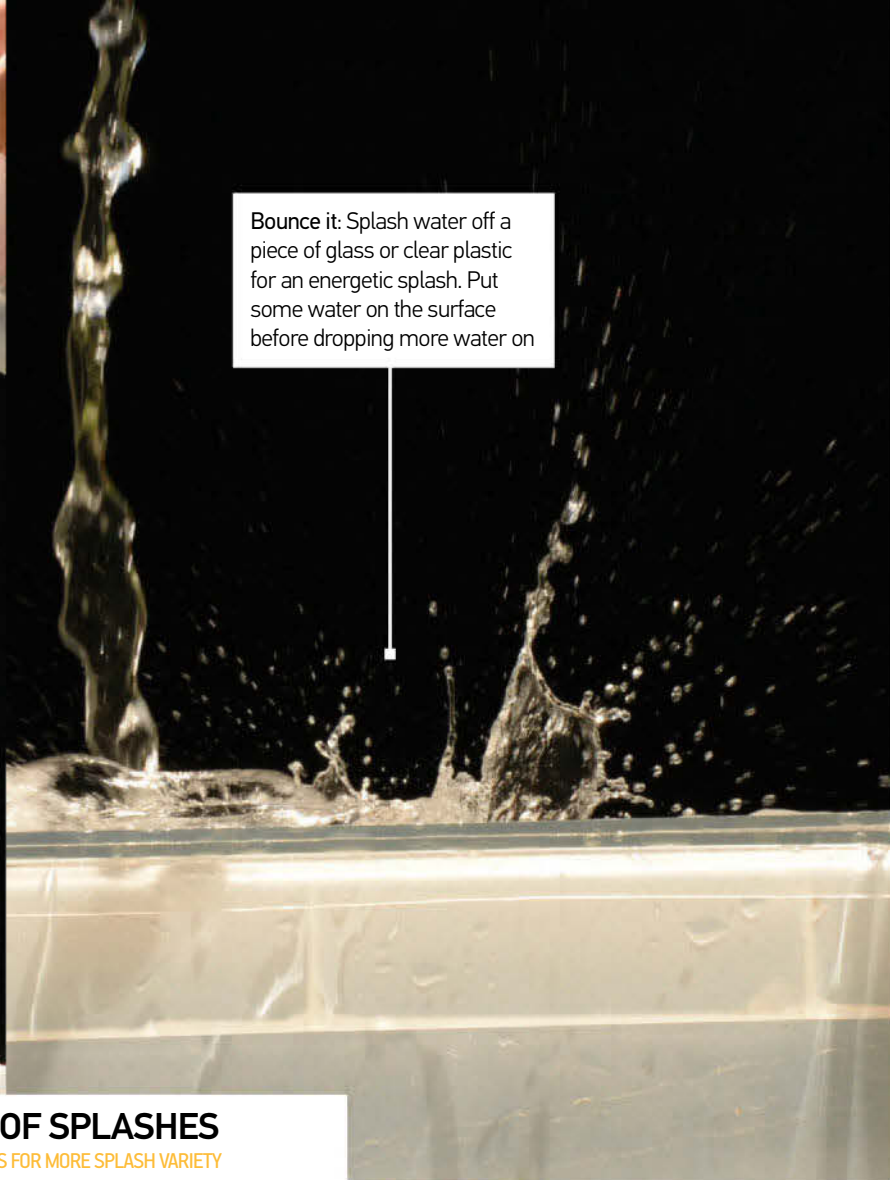
02 GET READY TO THROW THE WATER
Tell your assistant to throw in a down and back motion to achieve a wide, interesting splash pattern. Make sure the water falls directly into the tub.



03 TAKE LOTS OF SHOTS
This will take time to get both a good throw from your assistant and a sharp, well-timed photo from you. Try to keep your shutter speed at least around 1/3200 of a second for maximum sharpness.



Two cups, one splash: Use two cups with water thrown at each other to create an in-air splash. Be sure the amount of water in the cups is equal

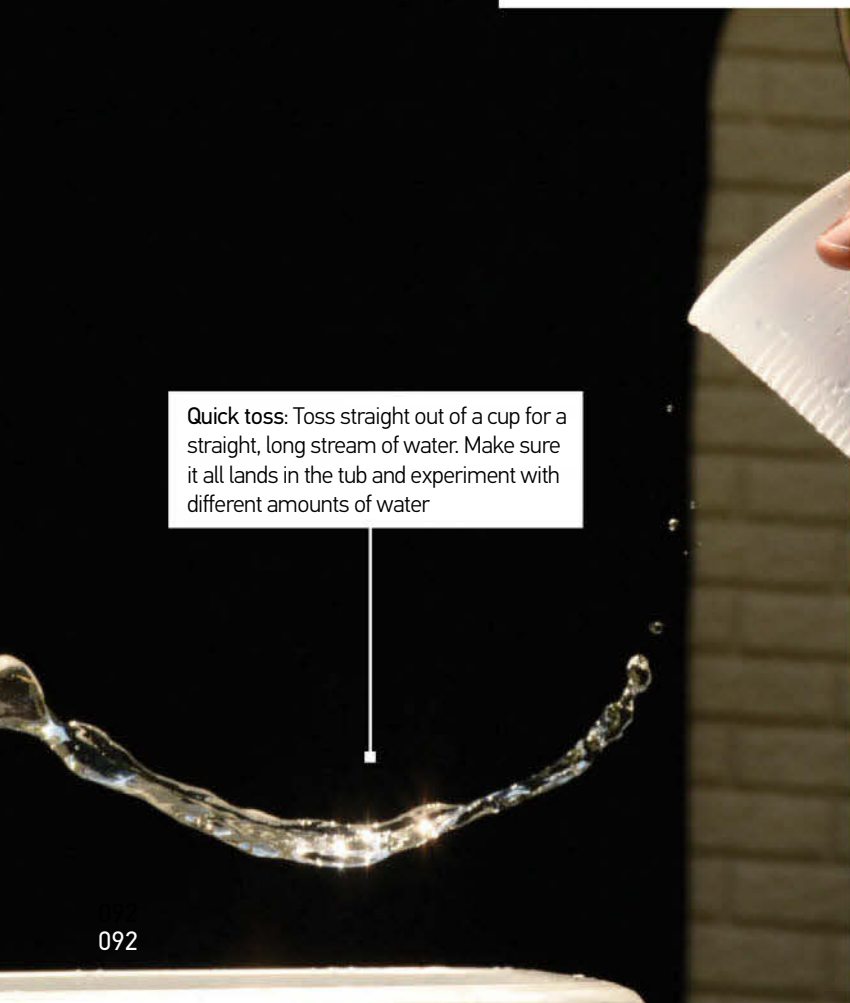


Bounce it: Splash water off a piece of glass or clear plastic for an energetic splash. Put some water on the surface before dropping more water on

DIFFERENT TYPES OF SPLASHES

USING DIFFERENT THROWING METHODS FOR MORE SPLASH VARIETY

Utilise both tools and throwing methods to get a variety of splashes. Use cups, a surface to drop the water on, and different throwing speeds.



Quick toss: Toss straight out of a cup for a straight, long stream of water. Make sure it all lands in the tub and experiment with different amounts of water



Swirl it: Use a swirling, tossing motion to create an upward, curving splash. This splash will be thick especially if you use a lot of water

WATER SPLASH DANCER

CREATE WATERY ARTWORK FROM THE SPLASH RESOURCES

One of the wonders of working with digital resources like water splashes is that you can create images that can't happen in real life. In this project we used the water splash stocks provided with the resources project to create this beautiful water splash ballerina.

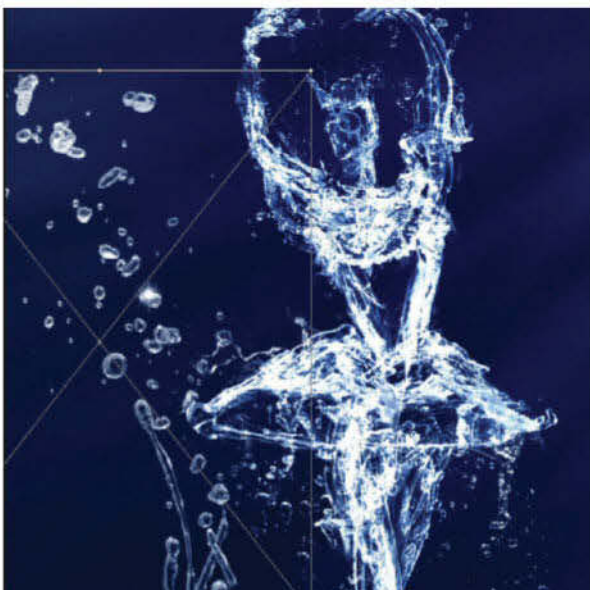
Start with a photo of the dancer and extract her from the background. Then desaturate the colours

so she is completely greyscale. A quick run of the Chrome filter (found in the Filter Gallery under the Sketch filters) with a detail of 0 and smoothness of 10, gives an effect that almost looks watery. This serves as the underpinning for adding in the splash stocks.

The key to success is to be familiar with each available stock and recognise where each drop, curve

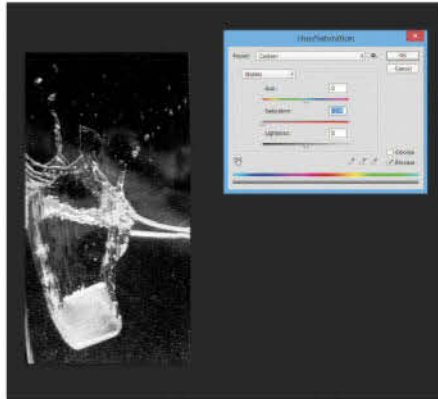
and splash will fit a feature of the image. Then it's a simple matter of layering the stock over the image, transforming it, masking it, and using the Linear Dodge blending mode.

Included with this issue is a video tutorial that completely walks through the process of crafting the dancer.



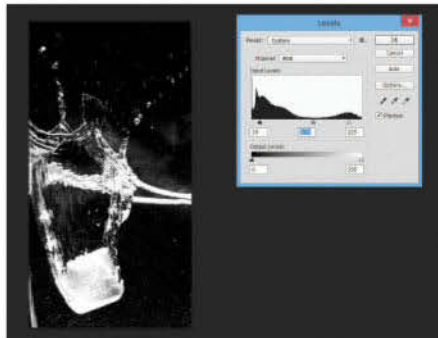
SHARPEN UP YOUR SPLASH

EDIT AND REFINE YOUR SPLASH IMAGES SO THEY ARE READY TO USE IN YOUR ARTWORK



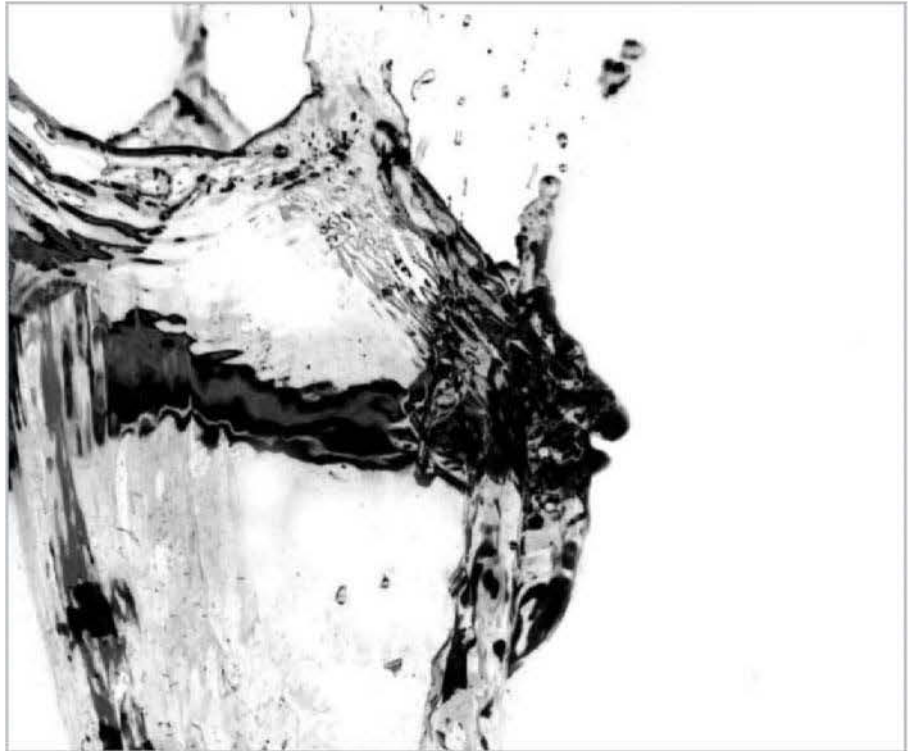
01 SELECT YOUR BEST SHOTS

The most tedious part of the editing process is selecting the best photos from the hundreds of options. Once you have your selections, open the first in Photoshop and desaturate it.



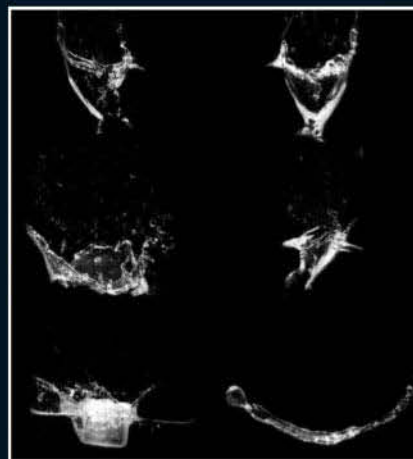
02 REFINE THEM

To make the contrast stronger, and the image cleaner, bring the shadows and highlights up and bring down the midtones. You should still be able to find the edges of the splash when you're done.



03 TURN IT INTO A BRUSH OR SAVE IT AS AN IMAGE

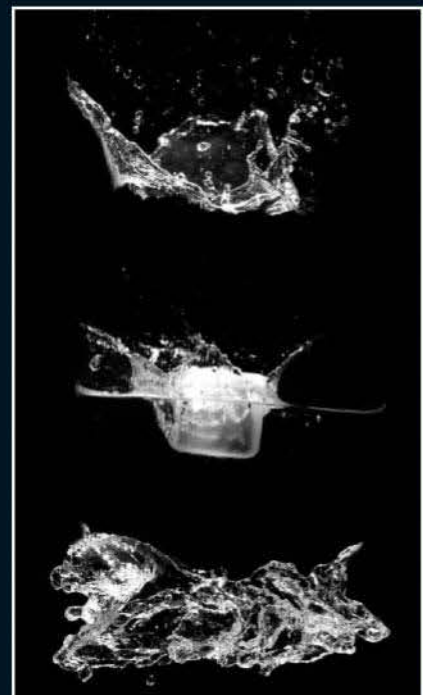
To do some final clean ups, invert the image and paint with white over any grey areas or spots that are not wanted in the final splash. Then you can turn it into a brush, or invert it back to save it as an image.



15 WATER SPLASH IMAGES

USE OUR SPLASH STOCKS

We've included 15 of our best water splash shots that are free for you to use in your personal work. These are in the FileSilo as high resolution stock images and as a custom brush file for Photoshop.



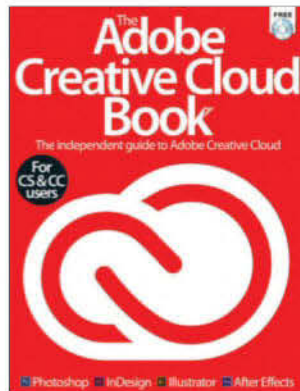
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